Sporting News COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wisconsin's Vince Biegel

THE NO. 1 FAN CHOICE

PRESEASON TOP 10

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2 CLEMSON
3 OKLAHOMA
4 OHIO STATE
5 BAYLOR
6 FLORIDA STATE
7 OLE MISS
8 MICHIGAN
9 STANFORD
10 NOTRE DAME

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A tangled Webb we weave

The "silly season" is no longer confined to the free-agency period in professional sports when NBA/NFL/MLB players change teams or NASCAR drivers switch cars.

Of course, this is nothing new for college basketball, which has been losing younger and younger players to the pros for years–and had "student-athletes" switch uniforms as often as Lady Gaga makes a wardrobe change.

Although the graduate-transfer rule came into effect in 2006, it's really a relatively new phenomenon for college football. Russell Wilson was the first really exceptional player to take advantage of it at Wisconsin in 2011 and, since then, there's been no looking back. We've seen more and more players take advantage of the "student" part of "student-athlete" by turning their graduation progress into one final destination in which to show the NFL scouts their gridiron wares.

Of course, it's great to see athletes finally get "rewarded" for something after the NCAA schools have been using their images on video games and numbers on jerseys to rake in cash that goes to increasing coaches' salaries and erecting bigger and better luxury boxes for big donors. It goes without saying that these rewards the players are reaping aren't of the monetary variety. If they turn that fifth year in school into a higher draft position, of course, the reward will be a financial one.

It pains me to take one of these graduate transfers to task for taking advantage of a system that so often takes advantage of players just like him.

So it pains me to take one of these graduate transfers to task for taking advantage of a system that so often takes advantage of players just like him.

I give you the case of Davis Webb, the strong-armed former Texas Tech quarterback who announced his graduate-transfer intentions early this year and in March committed to make Colorado his final football home. The 2013 Holiday Bowl MVP, who threw for 5,557 yards and 46 touchdowns during his 23-game Red Raiders career, spent his spring break in Boulder with Colorado's coaches and players, watching their practices and studying film with them.

He then tweeted out a GIF of himself throwing a pass in a No. 7 Colorado uniform with UNLEASH THE BEAST emblazoned atop it.

His tweet: "Thank you coach MacIntyre and CU for the opportunity. I have committed to Colorado! #GoBuffs"

"I wish I was there right now," he said after visiting. "I love the Buffaloes and I want to be the quarterback for the 2016 season."

Then he told foxsports.com this: "I just know it's a good fit with Colorado. I really like what (head) coach Mac (Mike MacIntyre) and (offensive coordinator) coach (Brian) Lindgren are doing with the offense. I like that they are scheduled to play eight preseason Top 25 teams. I'll have a good chance to showcase my ability on the road at Oregon and at Michigan. I will get plenty of exposure to pursue my dream of playing in the NFL.

"I really feel Colorado is just a couple of players from taking that next step to where the Colorado Buffaloes have been before (in the Top 25) and where Colorado should be."

Webb capped all that elation and sealed that promise to CU and MacIntyre by signing a nonbinding financial-aid agreement with the school. It turns out that the word "nonbinding" would come back to haunt the Buffaloes, as Webb proceeded to go a-courting across the landscape of college football. He updated his status with Colorado from "In a Relationship With" to "It's Complicated" and took visits to Cal and Auburn.

The 6-5, 224-pound Texan confirmed in mid-April that he was exploring his options and was "just trying to gather as much information to make the best choice for myself."

That left MacIntyre, Colorado and our preview of the Buffs in limbo as our deadline approached on April 22.

I don't think the NCAA anticipated that graduate transfers would "shop" themselves quite like the way Webb has. The body that governs college athletics should perhaps address this issue with something similar to a "binding" letter-of-intent for grad transfers. Experienced FBS quarterbacks–a commodity in short supply–will especially continue to take advantage while playing college football's version of the "Dating Game."

And if the NCAA's not careful, it may be opening the door for a long-running sequel to "The Price is Right."

Scott Smith @scott_SNyrbks

WEBB: SUE OGROCKI / AP

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ROSS D. FRANKLIN / AP

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EDITORIAL
Editor Scott Smith
Assistant Editor Will Long
Editorial Assistant Tyler Miller
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PRODUCTION
Creative Services/Art Director Scott H. Greig
Creative Director Valerie Deri Helvey
Graphic Assistant Craig Lundt

ADVERTISING
VP of Sales Michael Schriver
704-973-1625 / mschriver@bizjournals.com
National Sales Manager Lisa Yarbrough
704-973-1624 / lyarbrough@bizjournals.com
National Account Manager Tom Buttrick
917-421-9051 / t.buttrick@jamesgelliott.com
National Marketing Director June Lough
917-421-9046 / j.lough@jamesgelliott.com

ADMINISTRATION (704) 973-1300
Business Manager Traci Crenshaw
Administrators Lorie Hiers, Megan Magri, Danny Nease

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OREGON: RYAN KANG / AP

Tide-al wave

Is anyone in college football capable of flipping the script on defending champ Alabama and preventing a repeat?

BY BILL BENDER
Sporting News college football writer

Alabama's Nick Saban

Can anybody stop the Tide? Alabama enters the 2016 college football season as *Sporting News'* No. 1 and the best bet to make the third College Football Playoff. Alabama is the only school to make the first two playoffs, and wherever the Crimson Tide goes, big questions follow.

- Who starts at quarterback in Tuscaloosa: Blake Barnett, Cooper Bateman or David Cornwell?
- Can offensive coordinator Lane Kiffin work his magic with a first-time starter for the third consecutive year?
- How do the Tide replace Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry?
- Can Nick Saban win a fifth national championship at Alabama and sixth overall that would tie him with the legendary Bear Bryant?

Somebody will have to step up and challenge the Tide.

Will it be from the SEC West? Alabama owns three of the last four SEC championships. Ole Miss managed to beat Alabama the last two seasons, and the Tide travel to Oxford in September. Alabama also visits LSU this season, and again will have to shut down first-team *Sporting News* All-American Leonard Fournette.

Or can somebody from the SEC East step up? Georgia and South Carolina have new coaches in Kirby Smart and Will Muschamp, respectively. Tennessee is a chic pick for that breakout year, but the Vols have to beat Florida first.

Will Clemson get a rematch? The Tigers have the best quarterback in college football in Deshaun Watson, and he showed why with 478 total yards in last year's 45-40 loss to Alabama in the College Football Playoff championship. Of course, Clemson has road games with Auburn, Florida State and Georgia Tech.

What about the other ACC contenders? Florida State returns Dalvin Cook, and Miami and Virginia Tech begin new regimes with Mark Richt and Justin Fuente, respectively. The conference always best known for hoops is on the upswing.

Will it come from the Big 12? Oklahoma returns Baker Mayfield and Samaje Perine for the best one-two backfield punch heading into 2016. High-scoring Baylor led the nation with 48.1 points per game and gets back do-it-all QB Seth Russell. Even with a new quarterback, TCU will be in the mix, too.

How about the Big Ten? Ohio State, Michigan and Michigan State are all capable of being top-10 teams and making runs to the College Football Playoff. Jim Harbaugh's second season at Michigan is the click-worthy storyline, but the Wolverines must overcome visits to East Lansing and Columbus this year.

What about the Pac-12, the conference left out of the Playoff last season? Stanford returns Heisman favorite Christian McCaffrey, while Oregon looks to bounce back from a rare four-loss campaign. Southern Cal gets the first crack at Alabama in the season opener.

Could that challenge to the Tide come from outside the Power Five? Notre Dame is where the most intriguing quarterback battle will take place. Coach Brian Kelly must choose between DeShone Kizer and Malik Zaire to take on a brutal schedule.

Then there's Houston, the "Group of Five" school coming off a 13-1 season that included a 4-0 record against ranked teams. Coach Tom Herman and quarterback Greg Ward Jr. can build on that momentum in the opener against Oklahoma.

That's the script, but since when does college football follow it? There should be enough twists and turns on the way to the next College Football Playoff, but the first page starts with the same old question.

We'll get the answer if Alabama loses.

SABAN: LM OTERO / AP

Handicapping the Heisman race

L-R: Christian McCaffrey, Dalvin Cook, Deshaun Watson, Leonard Fournette, Baker Mayfield.

Four of the top seven Heisman vote-getters from 2015 are back and that's impressive. But will it matter? In this election year, here's a look at how we're breaking down the candidates heading into the primaries:

THE FAVORITES

▸ **Christian McCaffrey, RB, Stanford:** McCaffrey ran for 2,019 yards, caught 45 passes for 645 yards, threw two TD passes, and returned one kickoff and one punt for a touchdown. The game plan for every Cardinal opponent: Contain McCaffrey.

▸ **Deshaun Watson, QB, Clemson:** A playmaker with his arm (4,104 yards, 35 TDs) and feet (1,105 yards, 12 TDs) playing in a system that gives him freedom to make plays. He also has weapons around him.

▸ **Leonard Fournette, RB, LSU:** The Heisman was Fournette's to lose after a huge start last season when he carried defenders (ask Auburn) to an average of 200 yards per game through the first six contests. When Alabama shut him down (19 carries for 31 yards) in November, too many contenders took advantage and the damage was done.

▸ **Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma:** The two-time walk-on QB (at Texas Tech and OU), Mayfield was just what the Sooners needed on the field and off of it. His competitiveness carried OU to the College Football Playoff and his ability nearly got the Sooners to the title game.

▸ **Dalvin Cook, RB, Florida State:** The biggest gamebreaker in college football, Cook is a touchdown waiting to happen no matter where the Seminoles are on the field. He had 11 TD runs of at least 20 yards last season and averaged 7.4 per carry with 1,691 yards.

THREE MORE

▸ **J.T. Barrett, QB, Ohio State:** Now that there's no debate that he's the guy under center, expect the Barrett we saw tear up the Big Ten in 2014.

▸ **Royce Freeman, RB, Oregon:** Only 20 running backs have reached 5,000 rushing yards in a career. With another performance like 2015, Freeman could be next in line.

▸ **Greg Ward Jr., QB, Houston:** The Cougars are for real and Ward is what makes it happen. He gets the big stage in Week One against Oklahoma.

BACK FROM INJURY

▸ **Seth Russell, QB, Baylor (neck):** Of his 29 TD passes last season before the injury in Week Seven, 19 were 22 yards or longer and he averaged 8.2 yards per carry.

▸ **Nick Chubb, RB, Georgia (knee):** He may not be 100 percent when the season starts. When he's at full speed, he's one of the nation's best.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT ...

▸ **Quarterbacks:** Josh Rosen (UCLA), Luke Falk (Washington State), Mason Rudolph (Oklahoma State), DeShone Kizer/Malik Zaire (Notre Dame)

Falk completed 69.4 percent of his passes last season for 4,561 yards, 38 TDs and eight picks. Impossible to top, right? Kizer and Zaire are both wildly talented, but will the Irish handle the multiple-QB issue better than Ohio State did last season?

▸ **Running backs:** Samaje Perine (Oklahoma), Shock Linwood (Baylor), Wayne Gallman (Clemson), Elijah Hood (North Carolina)

Any of these backs can make a Heisman push. Perine, Linwood and Gallman each play in explosive offenses and Hood looks like a superstar about to take his game to another level.

▸ **Receivers:** James Washington (Oklahoma State), JuJu Smith-Schuster (USC), KD Cannon (Baylor), Gabe Marks (Washington State)

Washington, Cannon and Marks have elite quarterbacks to get them the ball and Smith-Schuster will make USC's transition from Cody Kessler manageable.

THE MULTIPURPOSE CANDIDATES

▸ **Adoree' Jackson, DB/WR, USC:** Also a track standout, look for Jackson's role on offense to expand this season. He had two TD receptions, two punt returns for scores and a pick-six last season.

▸ **Jabrill Peppers, DB, Michigan:** To get into the Heisman discussion, Peppers needs to get his hands on the ball more in 2016; he had 25 returns, 18 carries and eight receptions last season.

NOTABLE NEWCOMERS

▸ **Jacob Eason, QB, Georgia:** The starting job is screaming to be taken and the five-star Eason arrived on campus early to win it. This will be Kirby Smart's biggest decision as a rookie head coach and could come with a huge payoff.

▸ **Dakota Prukop, QB, Oregon:** Vernon Adams was good for the Ducks last season as an FCS transfer. If Prukop, a grad import from Montana State, is better and gets Oregon to the top of the Pac-12, he'll find himself in the discussion.

▸ **John Franklin III, QB, Auburn:** Big wild card here. First, he has to beat out Jeremy Johnson and Sean White for the job. The juco transfer has what coach Gus Malzahn likes in his QB–speed, elusiveness and a strong arm–but is the former scout-team QB at Florida State ready for the SEC?

–Bill Bender

COOK: PHELAN M. EBENHACK / AP; MCCAFFREY: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP; WATSON: CHRIS CARLSON / AP; FOURNETTE: JONATHAN BACHMAN / AP; MAYFIELD: NATI HARNIK / AP

SportingNews

PRESEASON ALL-AMERICA TEAM

FIRST TEAM

OFFENSE

- QB **Deshaun Watson**, Jr., Clemson
- RB **Leonard Fournette**, Jr., LSU
- RB **Christian McCaffrey**, Jr., Stanford
- WR **JuJu Smith-Schuster**, Jr., USC
- WR **Calvin Ridley**, So., Alabama
- TE **Jake Butt, Sr.**, Michigan
- OL **Cam Robinson**, Jr., Alabama
- OL **Roderick Johnson**, Jr., Florida State
- OL **Pat Elflein**, Sr., Ohio State
- OL **Dan Feeney**, Sr., Indiana
- OL **Ethan Pocic**, Sr., LSU
- K **Jake Elliott**, Sr., Memphis

DEFENSE

- DL **Jonathan Allen**, Sr., Alabama
- DL **Myles Garrett**, Jr., Texas A&M
- DL **Malik McDowell**, Jr., Michigan State
- DL **Carlos Watkins**, Sr., Clemson
- LB **Raekwon McMillan**, Jr., Ohio State
- LB **Malik Jefferson**, So., Texas
- LB **Ben Boulware**, Sr., Clemson
- CB **Desmond King**, Sr., Iowa
- CB **Jalen Tabor**, Jr., Florida
- S **Jamal Adams**, Jr., LSU
- S **Cameron Sutton**, Sr., Tennessee
- P **Hayden Hunt**, Sr., Colorado State
- RET **Jabrill Peppers**, Jr., Michigan

SECOND TEAM

OFFENSE

- QB **J.T. Barrett**, Jr., Ohio State
- RB **Dalvin Cook**, Jr., Florida State
- RB **Samaje Perine**, Jr., Oklahoma
- WR **Gabe Marks**, Sr., Washington State
- WR **Travis Rudolph**, Jr., Florida State
- TE **O.J. Howard**, Sr., Alabama
- OL **Zach Banner**, Sr., USC
- OL **Conor McDermott**, Sr., UCLA
- OL **Dan Voltz**, Sr., Wisconsin
- OL **Greg Pyke**, Sr., Georgia
- OL **Caleb Peterson**, Sr., North Carolina
- K **Andy Phillips**, Sr., Utah

DEFENSE

- DL **Carl Lawson**, Jr., Auburn
- DL **Derek Barnett**, Jr., Tennessee
- DL **Eddie Vanderdoes**, Sr., UCLA
- DL **Dalvin Tomlinson**, Sr., Alabama
- LB **Reuben Foster**, Sr., Alabama
- LB **Kendell Beckwith**, Sr., LSU
- LB **Anthony Walker**, Jr., Northwestern
- CB **Jourdan Lewis**, Sr., Michigan
- CB **Tre'Davious White**, Sr., LSU
- S **Budda Baker**, Jr. Washington
- S **Eddie Jackson**, Sr., Alabama
- P **Cameron Johnston**, Sr., Ohio State
- RET **Adoree' Jackson**, Jr., USC

Hired guns to watch

For teams looking for a quick fix at quarterback, the graduate-transfer wagon rolls on in college football. If you're looking for the next Vernon Adams (Eastern Washington to Oregon) or Jeff Driskel (Florida to Louisiana Tech)–both had major impacts during their one-year "rentals" last season–these fifth-year gunslingers are the ones to watch:

DAKOTA PRUKOP

(Montana State to Oregon)

For the second straight year, coach Mark Helfrich is bringing in a prolific FCS quarterback to run the show in Eugene. At 6-2, Prukop is three inches taller than Vernon Adams, and is a bit more of a dual threat, having rushed for 1,763 yards and 24 touchdowns during his two years directing the Bobcats' offense in Bozeman. But Prukop, who runs the 40 in 4.5 seconds, is no slouch in the passing game, either, having thrown for 5,584 yards and 46 touchdowns (16 INTs) in 22 starts during 2014-15. Adams and Prukop faced off in an epic battle during 2014, with Adams' Eastern Washington team winning 52-51 but Prukop arguably outplaying his counterpart. While Adams outpaced Prukop in total offense (375 to 316 yards), Prukop was more efficient, putting up five TDs and no interceptions to Adams' two scores and two picks.

TREVOR KNIGHT

(Oklahoma to Texas A&M)

The Aggies beat out Auburn and LSU in a whirlwind romance to land Baker Mayfield's predecessor at Oklahoma. The 6-1, 215-pound Knight threw for 3,424 yards and 25 touchdowns and ran for another 853 yards and eight scores in 24 games with the Sooners. Knight's arrival in January was especially welcome after last year's starter, Kyle Allen, and his backup, Kyler Murray, left the program in December. Allen transferred to Houston, while Murray ended up going to Oklahoma in what turned out to essentially be a Knight-for-Murray trade.

Trevor Knight

PATRICK TOWLES

(Kentucky to Boston College)

Boston College's 111.2 yards passing per game last season ranked last in the ACC and 125th in the nation, and Towles was brought in to address that problem. The 6-5, 238-pound Fort Thomas, Ky., native made 22 starts at Kentucky, completing 427 of 759 passes for 5,099 yards with 24 touchdowns and 24 interceptions. He was in a fierce competition with sophomore Darius Wade for the starting job during spring drills.

DAVIS WEBB

(Texas Tech to Colorado?)

With last year's backup, Cade Apsay, dismissed from the team in March and the primary starter, Sefo Liufau, still questionable in his recovery from a late-season Lisfranc injury, there's opportunity at Colorado, which hasn't been to a bowl game since 2007. Webb committed to the Buffs in March, but hadn't followed through by press time, taking rumored visits to Cal and Auburn. The 6-5, 224-pound pro-style QB started 23 games during his three years in Lubbock, throwing for 5,557 yards and 46 touchdowns with 22 interceptions.

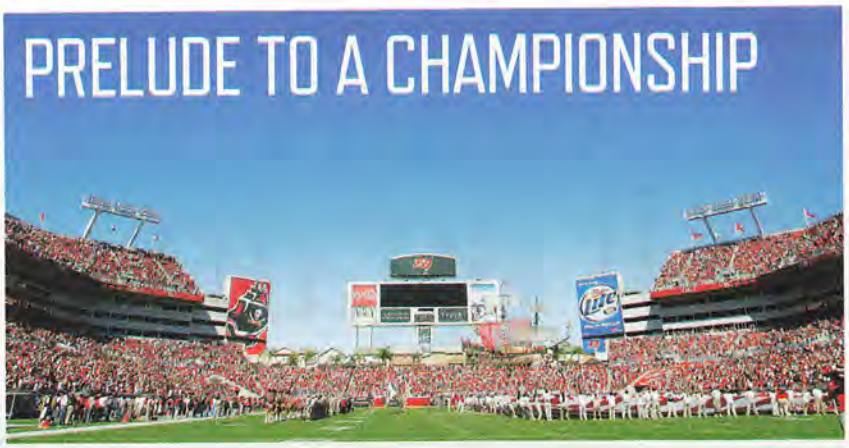
AUSTIN APPLEBY

(Purdue to Florida)

The importance of adding the 6-4, 235-pound ex-Boilermaker was shown in early March when returning starter Treon Harris was suspended at the beginning of spring practice. Appleby will battle Oregon State transfer Luke Del Rio and Harris (if he's reinstated) for the starting job. The Ohio native has big-game experience, having started 11 games at Purdue and throwing for 2,777 yards and 19 touchdowns. In his last Big Ten game for the Boilermakers last November, he completed 36 passes for 332 yards in a 54-36 loss to Indiana.

–Scott Smith

PRELUDE TO A CHAMPIONSHIP



CFP title game buildup will draw upon Super Bowl Week blueprint

BY PETE WILLIAMS
Sporting News Yearbooks correspondent

In the days leading up to college football's National Championship Game Jan. 9, the Tampa Convention Center will be turned into an interactive football theme park. Building upon 2016 game week at the Phoenix Convention Center, there will be a mini-football field with team logos and end zones, a live ESPN set, sponsor booths and promotions, plus a championship trophy displayed with all of the reverence of the Lombardi Trophy or Stanley Cup.

On Media Day, the players will meet with hundreds of reporters as a giant screen projects video feeds from the head coach and star players. Fans will be able to watch from temporary bleachers, using earpieces to listen in on the interviews. Fans also can obtain autographs from past stars of the participating teams, peruse memorabilia from the College Football Hall of Fame, walk the perimeter of radio row and bask in the pageantry of the culmination of the NCAA's third-annual College Football Playoff.

If it seems like Super Bowl week, well, that's just the point. Tampa, like Phoenix and future college championship sites Atlanta (2018) and New Orleans (2020), has hosted the NFL title game multiple times, most recently in 2009, and has plenty of experience throwing a weeklong football party.

"It's an awesome opportunity to roll out the red carpet to showcase your community and college football on a global stage," says Rob Higgins, executive director of the Tampa Bay Sports Commission.

College football, maligned for years for its unwieldy BCS system and lack of a playoff, now is taking advantage of its popular, three-year-old, four-team tournament to crown a champion, not just in terms of increased television and sponsor dollars but by delivering a week-long attraction for those not among the 70,000-plus who will pack an expanded Raymond James Stadium for the Monday night title game.

That means not only a three-day FanFest inside the host city's convention center, but also free concerts, a 5K running event and opportunities for fans to showcase their football skills on a mini-turf field.

"There's only one Super Bowl and we don't want to replicate it," says Bill Hancock, the College Football Playoff's executive director. "But we've added to the amenities so that fans without tickets can still experience the event."

The so-called "FanFest" concept dates back to July of 1991 at the Major League Baseball All-Star Game. Sponsored by Coca-Cola of Canada and held at the Toronto Convention Center, the event was a combination baseball theme park and merchandise store. Fans could hit in batting cages, see how baseball cards were made and, of course, buy official team merchandise. Originally designed to pacify fans that could not obtain (or afford) tickets to the game, FanFest became a smash hit, drawing 100,000 fans over four days.

Baseball's success inspired the NFL to debut its "NFL Experience" in Minneapolis six months later, prior to Super Bowl XXVI. Basketball followed a month after that with its "NBA Jam Session" during All-Star Weekend in Phoenix. In July 1992, MLB expanded the concept further at its All-Star Game in San Diego, with trading-card manufacturer Upper Deck paying $400,000 for title sponsorship, providing dozens of autograph guests, staging an old-timers' "Legends" game and manufacturing special-edition trading cards for the event.

So while the College Football Playoff's weeklong festivities might originate from a 25-year-old playbook, the championship game does have advantages over the pro leagues. The early-January date means students from participating schools can still make the trip before classes resume from the holidays–even if the kids can't afford tickets ($450 in Phoenix). That gives the game, or at least the ancillary events, more of a true-fan feel and less of the VIP corporate vibe of professional All-Star games and the Super Bowl.

The related events include "Taste of the Championship," another Super Bowl-inspired production in which renown chefs from several cities across the country showcase their skills to raise funds for local food banks; "Playoff Playlist Live," three straight nights of free concerts (which last year included John Mellencamp); and the Extra Yard for Teachers 5K, a downtown run to support College Football Playoff's Extra Yard for Teachers initiative.

There's also the possibility–slim as it might seem given the recent fortunes of the local NFL team–that the Tampa Bay Buccaneers could host a wild-card playoff game a day or two before the college championship, adding to the football smorgasbord.

Game day will include a sprawling pregame festival with a concert (country star Eric Church played in Phoenix), pull-up contests and giant Jenga games. Football fans in Tampa have grown accustomed over the last two decades to Outback Bowl officials staging a packed schedule of events in the week leading up to the New Year's morning game pitting the Big Ten and SEC. And Raymond James Stadium, of course, has crowned two Super Bowl champions and served as home of the Buccaneers since 1998.

All of it makes the college football championship seem like not only the biggest game in college football but also an event with a weeklong, pro-caliber buildup.

"It's not just a very important game," says Higgins, whose staff has been preparing since winning a bid for the game late in 2013. "It's a weeklong celebration of college football."

Pete Williams is a Florida-based correspondent for Sporting News Yearbooks.

RAYMOND JAMES STADIUM: CHRIS O'MEARA / AP; KNIGHT: CHARLIE RIEDEL / AP

↘ Tide, Tigers at the top

Let's do it again

SportingNews PRESEASON TOP 25

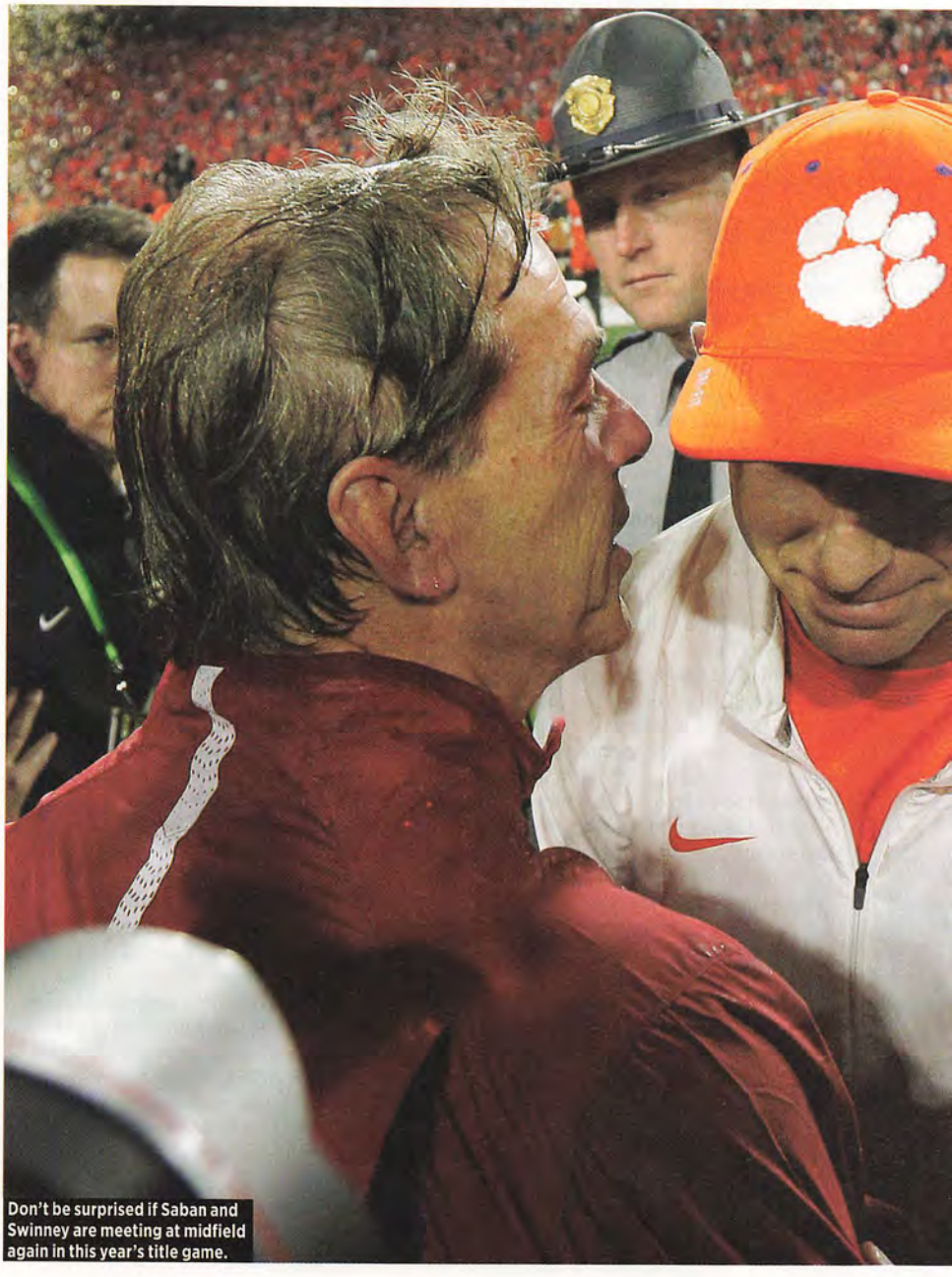
Looking at our preseason cream of the crop, a rematch of last season's CFP title game is well within the bounds of reason heading into this college football season.

BY BILL BENDER
Sporting News college football writer

It's not breaking any limbs to put Alabama at the top of our preseason Top 25 heading into 2016. The Crimson Tide operates on a national championship-or-bust standard, and that won't change in Tuscaloosa this season. The closest competition is the same as last year. After all, Clemson has the best quarterback in college football in Deshaun Watson.

It was a tough decision to choose between the two Southern powers, but the four-team College Football Playoff field is as wide-open as ever entering its third year.

1 **ALABAMA:** Nick Saban's "Death Star" continues to spin, and the Crimson Tide will seek a fifth national championship since he took over as head coach in 2007. The quarterback battle is the preseason focus again, and this time junior Cooper Bateman and redshirt freshman Blake Barnett are fighting for the job. That's the biggest question for a team that returns back big-time playmakers such as wide



Don't be surprised if Saban and Swinney are meeting at midfield again in this year's title game.

Alabama's Calvin Ridley

SABAN, SWINNEY: DAVID J. PHILLIP / AP; RIDLEY: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP

receiver Calvin Ridley and defensive end Jonathan Allen. It's the same old challenge, but the Crimson Tide are equipped for a repeat.

2 **CLEMSON:** Clemson lost the College Football Playoff championship game to Alabama last season, but it felt like a win in some ways given the outstanding play of quarterback Deshaun Watson. That alone puts Clemson on the short list of top offenses for 2016. The defense lost a few impact players to the NFL, and that's the challenge for coach Dabo Swinney and defensive coordinator Brent Venables. Clemson's schedule features road games at Auburn, Georgia Tech and Florida State.

3 **OKLAHOMA:** Oklahoma reclaimed the Big 12 throne last season. Bringing in offensive coordinator Lincoln Riley was a masterstroke from coach Bob Stoops, who has a team built for all those Big 12 track meets. Heisman candidate Baker Mayfield and Samaje Perine give the Sooners a dynamic one-two punch in the backfield, and they'll be needed. Oklahoma plays Houston, Ohio State and TCU before the Red River Showdown against Texas on Oct. 8.

4 **OHIO STATE:** Ohio State has to replace 16 starters, including nine players who left early for the NFL Draft. The Buckeyes still are the favorites to win the Big Ten because junior J.T. Barrett is the undisputed starter at quarterback and he has a bunch of young playmakers on his side. Linebacker Raekwon McMillan will stabilize the defense. Urban Meyer is 50-4 and has won at least 12 games in each of his four years at OSU. This machine in Columbus isn't stopping anytime soon.

5 **BAYLOR:** The Bears led the FBS by averaging 48.1 points per game last season despite late-season injuries to quarterbacks Seth Russell and Jarrett Stidham, not to mention running back Shock Linwood. Baylor's playmakers are back, and coach Art Briles has proven his system works after eight seasons in Waco. The defense returns six starters. A three-week stretch against Texas, TCU and Oklahoma will let us know if Baylor is ready for that breakthrough.

6 **FLORIDA STATE:** The standards in Tallahassee are such that a 10-win season is a letdown, but coach Jimbo Fisher retooled with another top-five recruiting class that will build depth around both sides. Tailback Dalvin Cook could challenge for the Heisman Trophy. At quarterback, senior Sean Maguire may have to hold off redshirt freshman Deondre Francois for the starting job. Consider the Seminoles to be somewhat off-the-radar as a playoff contender, but they'll leap onto that radar in a big way if they beat Ole Miss on Labor Day.

7 **OLE MISS:** Which is the only team to beat Alabama each of the last two seasons? Ole Miss—and the Rebels get the Crimson Tide in Oxford this season. This ranking might seem high given how much the Rebels lost to the NFL, but Chad Kelly is back at quarterback and Hugh Freeze has built a team capable of winning the SEC West. A Labor Day opener against Florida State in Orlando is a statement game for this program.

8 **MICHIGAN:** Michigan's momentum hasn't slowed heading into Year 2 of the Jim Harbaugh Era, and the Wolverines will be a popular pick to win the Big Ten. Harbaugh's outside-the-box recruiting tactics are working. Everything fits right now. Michigan needs to find a quarterback, however, but Houston transfer John O'Korn could be that guy. Safety Jabrill Peppers is the X-factor for new defensive coordinator Don Brown. The hype continues for the Maize-and-Blue, but road games at Michigan State, Iowa and Ohio State won't be easy.

9 **STANFORD:** Stanford was playing as well as anybody in the country at the end of last season, and it doesn't hurt to have the NCAA's single-season record-holder for all-purpose yards, Christian McCaffrey, back in the fold. Junior Keller Chryst and senior Ryan Burns, both 6-5 and around 235 pounds, will battle for the starting job at quarterback. The Cardinal are solid on both sides, and will be favored to win the Pac-12. Stanford faces a tough road schedule, though, and an intriguing Friday night opener against Kansas State.

10 **NOTRE DAME:** The quarterback battle will be the focus leading up to the opener at Texas. Will coach Brian Kelly go with Malik Zaire or DeShone Kizer—or a rotation of both? The Fighting Irish lost several impact players to the NFL, but Kelly has built depth through recruiting. It will be interesting to see how much that shows against a tough schedule that includes the usual rivals plus Michigan State, Virginia Tech and Miami.

11 **MICHIGAN STATE:** Mark Dantonio's team is not in rebuilding mode despite the loss of a banner senior class that won two Big Ten championships. Replacing Connor Cook is the top priority, and it wouldn't be a surprise to see multiple quarterbacks in September. LJ Scott is a star-in-waiting at tailback. The defensive line retools around first-round talent Malik McDowell. The Spartans travel to Notre Dame and bring in Ohio State and Michigan, all teams that likely will be favored against them. That's just the way Dantonio likes it.

12 **LSU:** The pressure is on Les Miles, and he knows it. The Tigers' coach brought in ex-Wisconsin assistant Dave Aranda to coordinate the defense, and LSU has nine starters returning on both sides of the ball. Heisman contender Leonard Fournette is the centerpiece at running back, but the Tigers need more from quarterback Brandon Harris. Both Ole Miss and Alabama visit Tiger Stadium this year. Miles is working with another roster flush with future NFL talent. He needs to deliver this time.

13 **TENNESSEE:** Tennessee lost four games by a combined 17 points last season before rattling off seven straight wins capped with an impressive 45-6 blowout over Northwestern in the Outback Bowl. Joshua Dobbs' evolution at quarterback continues, and cornerback Cameron Sutton returns to bolster the defense. There's offseason turmoil resulting from a Title IX lawsuit, but coach Butch Jones has this team ready to win the SEC East on the field. September games against Virginia Tech (at NASCAR's Bristol Motor Speedway) and against Florida will set the tone.

14 **HOUSTON:** It has been branded the "H-Town Takeover," and coach Tom Herman completed one of the most remarkable makeovers of the 2015 season. Quarterback Greg Ward Jr. is back from the team that finished 13-1 and 4-0 against ranked opponents last season. The high-flying Cougars are the only "Group of Five" team to make our preseason Top 25, and they'll get a chance to state their case in their home season opener at NRG Stadium against Oklahoma in what should arguably be the season's best first-week game.

Michigan State's LJ Scott

SCOTT: CARLOS OSORIO / AP

15 **USC:** Last year, Clay Helton took over for embattled coach Steve Sarkisian halfway through a turmoil-filled campaign to flip USC's season and lead it to the Pac-12 Championship Game. But the Trojans are still coming off a six-loss season and face a show-me opener at AT&T Stadium against Alabama. The quarterback battle between Max Browne and Sam Darnold should be interesting, and cornerback/wideout Adoree' Jackson is one of the nation's most exciting players. Give Helton the benefit of the doubt in his first full season.

16 **OKLAHOMA STATE:** The Cowboys should hang around in the Big 12 race, and they have an offense that can hang with the top teams in the conference. Quarterback Mason Rudolph will be protected by an experienced offensive line. Receiver James Washington caught 10 TDs last season, but the defense still ranked in the back half of the Big 12, allowing 30.5 points per game. Also, OSU is in a tough spot this year with road games at Baylor, TCU and Oklahoma.

17 **IOWA:** Iowa's dream undefeated regular season gave way to back-to-back bitter defeats in the Big Ten Championship Game and Rose Bowl, but coach Kirk Ferentz has a solid base to work with again. Quarterback C.J. Beathard and cornerback Desmond King are the leaders on either side of the ball, and Iowa isn't going to change its time-tested approach. The best part is a favorable schedule in which Northwestern, Wisconsin, Michigan and Nebraska all visit Kinnick Stadium. Iowa is set up for another Big Ten West run.

18 **NORTH CAROLINA:** The Tar Heels were the surprise team in the ACC last season, winning the Coastal Division, and Larry Fedora found the right combination on both sides with the help

Transfer Kenny Hill takes over as QB at TCU.

HILL: CARLOS OSORIO / AP

of new defensive coordinator Gene Chizik. Mitch Trubisky is on the spot to replace highly productive quarterback Marquise Williams, but handing off to running back Elijah Hood, who rushed for 1,488 yards and 17 TDs last season as a sophomore, should help. Another high-profile opener against an SEC team—this time Georgia—might be the key to North Carolina's playoff hopes.

19 **GEORGIA:** Former Alabama defensive coordinator Kirby Smart takes over as the head man in Athens, and the first-year coach will try to bring the lessons learned under Nick Saban with the Crimson Tide to lead Georgia to its first SEC championship since 2005. Highly touted freshman quarterback Jacob Eason, the son of longtime former New England Patriots QB Tony Eason, enrolled early and could start, and he'll lean on the return of explosive tailback Nick Chubb. Smart should make an immediate impact on the defensive side of the ball. The Bulldogs are the X-factor in the SEC East race.

20 **WASHINGTON:** Chris Petersen has led the Huskies to back-to-back winning seasons, but that's come with a 4-5 record in the Pac-12. The sophomore tandem of quarterback Jake Browning and running back Myles Gaskin operates behind an experienced line, and the Pac-12's top defense returns. Washington appears on the cusp of a breakthrough, but the schedule is brutal. No game looms larger than the trip to Oregon, a rival the Huskies haven't beaten since 2003.

21 **OREGON:** Oregon allowed 37.5 points per game in 2015, and that was a big reason the Ducks slid to 9-4. So defensive coordinator Don Pellum was demoted and former Michigan head coach Brady Hoke was brought in to run the defense. Another FCS transfer—this time it's Montana State's Dakota Prukop—is the favorite to start at quarterback after the graduation of Vernon Adams (ex-FCS Eastern Washington). Those are the keys to figuring out whether coach Mark Helfrich can take the Ducks back to the top of the Pac-12.

22 **LOUISVILLE:** The Cardinals bounced back from an 0-3 start to win eight games last season, and dual-threat quarterback Lamar Jackson could blossom into an All-ACC performer this year under coach Bobby Petrino. Several defensive starters opted to stay in school instead of bolting for the NFL, most notably linebacker/end Devonte Fields, who had 11 sacks last season. The early-season schedule isn't kind. Louisville faces Florida State and Clemson by Oct. 1.

23 **ARKANSAS:** Can Bret Bielema put a full season together in his fourth year as coach at Arkansas? Over the past two seasons, Arkansas is 5-7 in its first six games and 8-4 afterward. Yet that includes two bowl wins, and the schedule is set up for that run. Ole Miss, Alabama, LSU and Florida all visit Fayetteville. The Hogs are a big-and-physical team, and Austin Allen has the early beat on the quarterback job. Arkansas could be the breakout team in the SEC West.

24 **TEXAS:** This is a big year for Charlie Strong at Texas, and it starts at quarterback. Will he turn the job over to freshman Shane Buechele ahead of Tyrone Swoopes and Jerrod Heard? Buechele enrolled early and impressed during spring practice. The Longhorns had a strong recruiting class and the defense, which is improved and will continue getting better, can build around Malik Jefferson. The schedule is also a good bit friendlier than last year. The Longhorns have a real chance to break out.

25 **TCU:** The Horned Frogs found their footing in the Big 12 with a 15-3 record in conference play the last two seasons, and it's an interesting challenge for coach Gary Patterson this year. The offense will have to retool after losing quarterback Trevone Boykin and wideout Josh Doctson, and Texas A&M transfer Kenny Hill is the early front-runner to guide the offense. The defense was riddled with injuries last season, but several key players are coming back. Expect TCU to stay in the Big 12 hunt.

NEW DESTINATIONS: COACHES & PLAYERS

→ Compiled by Will Long

COACHES

FBS COACHING CHANGES

SCHOOL	FORMER COACH	NEW COACH
Ball State	Pete Lembo	Mike Neu
Bowling Green	Dino Babers	Mike Jinks
BYU	Bronco Mendenhall	Kalani Sitake
East Carolina	Ruffin McNeill	Scottie Montgomery
Georgia	Mark Richt	Kirby Smart
Georgia Southern	Willie Fritz	Tyson Summers
Hawaii	Norm Chow	Nick Rolovich
Illinois	Bill Cubit	Lovie Smith
Iowa State	Paul Rhoads	Matt Campbell
Louisiana-Monroe	Todd Berry	Matt Viator
Maryland	Randy Edsall	DJ Durkin
Memphis	Justin Fuente	Mike Norvell
Miami (Fla.)	Al Golden	Mark Richt
Minnesota	Jerry Kill	Tracy Claeys
Missouri	Gary Pinkel	Barry Odom
North Texas	Dan McCarney	Seth Littrell
Rutgers	Kyle Flood	Chris Ash
South Carolina	Steve Spurrier	Will Muschamp
Southern Miss	Todd Monken	Jay Hopson
Syracuse	Scott Shafer	Dino Babers
Texas State	Dennis Franchione	Everett Withers
Toledo	Matt Campbell	Jason Candle
Tulane	Curtis Johnson	Willie Fritz
UCF	George O'Leary	Scott Frost
USC	Steve Sarkisian	Clay Helton
UTSA	Larry Coker	Frank Wilson
Virginia	Mike London	Bronco Mendenhall
Virginia Tech	Frank Beamer	Justin Fuente

Will Muschamp, South Carolina

FCS COACHING CHANGES

SCHOOL	FORMER COACH	NEW COACH
Alcorn State	Jay Hopson	Fred McNair
Austin Peay	Kirby Cannon	Will Healy
Citadel	Mike Houston	Brent Thompson
Eastern Kentucky	Dean Hood	Mark Elder
Fordham	Joe Moorhead	Andrew Breiner
Jackson State	Harold Jackson	Tony Hughes
Jacksonville	Kerwin Bell	Ian Shields
James Madison	Everett Withers	Mike Houston
Maine	Jack Cosgrove	Joe Harasymiak
McNeese State	Matt Viator	Lance Guidry
Montana State	Rob Ash	Jeff Choate
Morgan State	Lee Hull	Fred Farrier
Savannah State	Earnest Wilson III	Erik Raeburn
South Dakota	Joe Glenn	Bob Nielson
Southern Illinois	Dale Lennon	Nick Hill
Southern Utah	Ed Lamb	Demario Warren
Tennessee Tech	Watson Brown	Marcus Satterfield
Texas Southern	Darrell Asberry	Mike Haywood
Western Illinois	Bob Nielson	Charlie Fisher

PLAYERS

TRANSFERS ELIGIBLE IN 2016

*Graduate Transfer

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Will Adams*	Auburn	Boise State
Sherman Alston Jr.	Boston College	Stony Brook
Zaire Andre	Washington State	Wagner
Eldin Anu	Kent State	Robert Morris
Austin Appleby*	Purdue	Florida
Hunter Atkinson	Georgia	Georgia State
Daniel Aust	South Alabama	Samford
Troy Bacon	Boise State	Portland State
Warren Ball*	Ohio State	Akron
Jalen Barnes	Texas Tech	Lamar
Raphael Barr*	Illinois	
Faton Bauta*	Georgia	Colorado State
B.J. Bello*	Illinois	Illinois State
Sam Benjamin*	Temple	Rhode Island
Chris Black*	Alabama	Missouri
Josiah Blandin*	Fresno State	
Ja'merez Bowen	Cincinnati	Indiana
Jackson Boyer	North Carolina	USC
Tim Boyle	Connecticut	Eastern Kentucky
Dhameer Bradley	Connecticut	Sacred Heart
A.J. Branisel	Tennessee	Florida International
Anthony Brown	Arkansas	Tennessee-Martin
Daquawn Brown	Washington State	Fresno State
Keith Brown*	Louisville	Western Kentucky
R.C. Brunstetter	N.C. State	West Virginia
George Bullock*	Tennessee	
Dontez Byrd	Louisville	Tennessee Tech
Squally Canada	Washington State	BYU
Duke Catalon	Texas	Houston
Dannon Cavil	Oklahoma	UTSA
Cecil Cherry	Texas	South Florida
Shelby Christy	Mississippi State	Louisiana
Cody Clark	Middle Tennessee	Citadel
Kalvin Cline*	Virginia Tech	Texas A&M
Jared Cohen	North Carolina	Virginia
Adrian Colbert*	Texas	Miami (Fla.)
Ron Coluzzi*	Central Michigan	Iowa
Deontae Cooper*	Washington	San Jose State
Jim Cooper*	Temple	Wagner
Jeffrey Coprich*	California	East Carolina
Antonio Crawford	Miami (Fla.)	West Virginia
Jordan Cunningham	Vanderbilt	North Carolina
Jonathan Curry	Purdue	Jacksonville State
Daniel David	Appalachian State	Kennesaw State
Nick Dawson-Brents*	Louisville	Western Kentucky
Jamel Dean	Ohio State	Auburn
Luke Del Rio	Oregon State	Florida
Chandler Dexter	Florida Atlantic	Central Arkansas
John Diarse*	LSU	TCU
Gehrig Dieter*	Bowling Green	Alabama
Tim DiGiorgio	Temple	East Stroudsburg
Steve Donatell*	Wake Forest	Western Kentucky
Travaris Dorsey	Florida	Tuskegee
Cedric Dozier*	California	Kansas State
Alex Duncan	Navy	Charlotte
Bryson Echols*	Texas	
Cameron Echols-Luper	TCU	Arkansas State
Trey Edmunds*	Virginia Tech	Maryland
Ukeme Eligwe	Florida State	Georgia Southern
Henry Enyenihi*	Illinois	
Danny Etling	Purdue	LSU
Amba Etta-Tawo*	Maryland	Syracuse
Andrew Everett	Old Dominion	Georgia State
Ronnie Feist*	LSU	UTSA
Tyler Ferguson*	Louisville	Western Kentucky
Michael Ferns	Michigan	West Virginia
Ryan Finley*	Boise State	
Maurice Fleming*	Iowa	
Keith Ford	Oklahoma	Texas A&M
Allen Gant*	Michigan	
Will Gardner*	Louisville	West Georgia
Darell Garretson	Utah State	Oregon State
Cole Garvin	Marshall	South Alabama
Jefferle Gibson	Clemson	Arizona Western
D.J. Gillins	Wisconsin	Pearl River CC
Jimmie Gipson III*	South Alabama	
Bryan Glover	Eastern Michigan	Duquesne
Kyle Goddard	Old Dominion	Presbyterian
Brandon Godfrey	Tulane	Nicholls State
LaQuvionte Gonzalez	Texas A&M	Kansas
Jordan Gowins	Boston College	Stony Brook
Austin Grammer	Middle Tennessee	West Alabama
Derrick Green*	Michigan	
J.J. Green	Georgia	Georgia Tech
Wesley Green	South Carolina	Indiana
Zack Greenlee*	Fresno State	UTEP
Brooks Haack*	Louisiana	Northwestern State
B.J. Hammond	Mississippi State	Jacksonville State
Austin Hardin*	Florida	
Khari Harding	Auburn	Tulsa
LeGrande Harley	South Florida	North Carolina Central
Tyree Harris*	Wake Forest	
Al Harris Jr.	South Carolina	Jacksonville State
Greg Hart	Nebraska	Kentucky
Christian Hauber	Air Force	Akron
Chris Hayes	Oregon State	Portland State
Jonathan Haynes	West Virginia	Stony Brook
Daniel Helm	Tennessee	Duke
Cory Helms	Wake Forest	South Carolina
Dewayne Hendrix	Tennessee	Pittsburgh
Dorian Hendrix	Kentucky	Bowling Green
Kenny Hill	Texas A&M	TCU
McCoy Hill	BYU	Southern Utah
C.J. Hilliard	Iowa	Ohio
Gunnar Holcombe*	Marshall	Tennessee-Martin
Germone Hopper*	Clemson	
Kevin Houchins Jr.*	Louisville	Ohio
Chase Hounshell*	Notre Dame	Ohio State
Lane Hovey*	Nebraska	Montana
Antonio Howard	Marshall	Independence CC
Austin Hudson	Wisconsin	South Florida
Malcolm Hudson	Army	Alcorn State
Daniel Imatorbhebhe	Florida	USC
Jarrell Jackson	Hawaii	Louisiana Tech
Tanner Jacobson	Texas Tech	BYU
Craig James	Minnesota	Southern Illinois
Darius James	Texas	Auburn
Anthony Jennings*	LSU	
Matt Jimison	Washington State	San Diego
De'Andre Johnson	Florida State	East Mississippi CC
Rahshead Johnson	USC	San Jose State
Bryce Jones	Boston College	Akron
Da'Mario Jones*	Michigan	Bowling Green
Jeff Jones	Minnesota	Iowa Western CC
Darrian Josey	Hawaii	Massachusetts
Jamil Kamara	Virginia	Cincinnati
Brayden Kearsley	BYU	Oregon State
Joe Keels*	Nebraska	Eastern Michigan
Trey Keenan	Texas Tech	North Texas

MUSCHAMP: DAVE MARTIN / AP

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Melvin Keihn	Virginia Tech	Maryland
Cody Keith*	East Carolina	Charlotte
Jermaine Kelly	Washington	San Jose State
Blake Kemp*	East Carolina	Northern Arizona
John Kenny	Iowa	Arizona
Jake Kiley*	Penn State	
Brian Kimbrow*	Vanderbilt	Middle Tennessee
DeVante Kincade	Ole Miss	Grambling State
Jake Knight	Auburn	Boise State
Trevor Knight*	Oklahoma	Texas A&M
Jackson Koonce*	SMU	North Dakota State
Jacob Kraut	Rutgers	Florida International
Conner Krizancic	Minnesota	Ohio
Dakota Kupp	Central Michigan	Wayne State
De'Niro Laster	Minnesota	Kentucky
Tevin Lawson	TCU	Nicholls State
Dallin Leavitt	BYU	Utah State
Raphael Leonard	Florida Atlantic	East Mississippi CC
Alex Leslie	Iowa State	Houston
E.J. Levenberry	Florida State	Connecticut
Geno Lewis*	Penn State	Oklahoma
Ronald Lewis	Arizona State	Louisiana Tech
Prescott Line*	SMU	
Dee Liner	Alabama	Arkansas State
Logan Lister	Rutgers	Navy
Jevaris Little*	Illinois	
AJ Long	Syracuse	Wagner
Marcus Loud	Missouri	Sam Houston State
Courtney Love	Nebraska	Kentucky
Vincent Lowe	Old Dominion	East Tennessee State
Thomas Lucas	Connecticut	Duquesne
Akeel Lynch*	Penn State	Nevada
Kanon Mackey	Texas State	Lamar
Rommel Mageo*	Oregon State	Ole Miss
Morgan Mahalak	Oregon	Towson
Conner Manning*	Utah	Georgia State
Bud Martin	Florida International	Eastern Illinois
William Martins	Oregon	Oklahoma State
I'Tavius Mathers	Ole Miss	Middle Tennessee
Teddy Matthews*	Wake Forest	
Tyler Matthews*	Southern Miss	New Mexico State
Delshawn McClellon*	Utah	
Johnny McCrary*	Vanderbilt	Mercer
Kamryn Melton	Auburn	Troy
Tommy Mister	Indiana	Northern Illinois
Nick Mitchell	Oregon State	Dixie State
Derrick Moncrief	Auburn	Oklahoma State
Collins Moore*	Ole Miss	Alcorn State
Earl Moore*	Miami (Fla.)	Toledo
Malachi Moore*	Boston College	Rutgers
Teldrick Morgan*	New Mexico State	
Alec Morris*	Alabama	North Texas
Trai Mosley	Nebraska	Central Arkansas
Marchie Murdock*	Illinois	Texas State
Kam Myers	Georgia State	Delta State
Elie Nabushosi*	SMU	
JoJo Natson	Utah State	Akron
T.J. Neal*	Illinois	Auburn
Alex Neale	UNLV	Montana State
Philip Nelson	Rutgers	East Carolina
Hardy Nickerson*	California	Illinois
Jason Nix	Army	Kansas
John O'Korn	Houston	Michigan
Alex Ogle	Boise State	Arizona Western
David Orlando	Miami (Ohio)	Texas Southern
Jalen Ortiz	UCLA	Wyoming
Joe Palange	Oklahoma	Utah State
Chase Pankey	Boston College	Illinois State
Andy Pappanastos*	Ole Miss	Alabama
Jacques Perra	Minnesota	St. Thomas
Avery Peterson	LSU	Cincinnati
Reese Phillips	Kentucky	Montana
Ondre Pipkins	Michigan	Texas Tech
Pat Porter	Washington State	Jacksonville State
Jeremi Powell*	Florida	Toledo
Gimel President*	Auburn	Illinois
Kyrin Priester	Clemson	Washington State
Eddie Printz*	Missouri	Texas State
Dakota Prukop*	Montana State	Oregon
Jake Raulerson*	Texas	UCLA
Troy Reeder	Penn State	Delaware
Quintin Reynolds	Old Dominion	James Madison
Thomas Richard	Missouri	Chattanooga
Terry Richardson*	Michigan	Marshall
Blair Roberts*	Old Dominion	
Jermaine Roberts	Texas	Sam Houston State
Austin Robinson	UTSA	Houston
Dane Rogers	Clemson	
Grant Rohach*	Iowa State	Buffalo
Shaun Rupert	Missouri	Memphis
Mike Ruggles	UTEP	South Florida

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Ra'Shaad Samples	Oklahoma State	Houston
Barry Sanders Jr.*	Stanford	Oklahoma State
Kendall Sanders	Texas	Arkansas State
Lance Sanders	Central Michigan	Ferris State
Devin Santana	Florida Atlantic	Alabama State
Joseph Scelfo*	South Alabama	N.C. State
Derrell Scott	Tennessee	East Carolina
Ronnie Scott	Florida Atlantic	Alabama State
Tee Shepard*	Ole Miss	Miami (Ohio)
Pedro Sibiea*	Louisville	
Lamont Simmons	USC	Georgia Tech
T.J. Simmons	Temple	Sierra College
Zack Singer	Kent State	UNLV
Anthony Smith*	Penn State	
Silas Spearman	Florida International	Alcorn State
Kevin Spears	LSU	Jacksonville State
Luke Stice*	Houston	Texas Tech
Tyrin Stone-Davis*	Illinois	
Chris Streveler*	Minnesota	
Tom Strobel*	Michigan	Ohio
Justin Strong	Oregon State	Montana
Marshall Taylor*	Miami (Ohio)	Auburn
Ross Taylor-Douglas*	Michigan	Rutgers
DaShaughn Terry	Memphis	Pittsburg State
Tramel Terry	Georgia	Jacksonville State
Vincent Testaverde	Texas Tech	Miami (Fla.)
Patrick Towles*	Kentucky	Boston College
Ricky Town	USC	Arkansas
Hez Trahan	Pittsburgh	Temple
Logan Tuley-Tillman*	Michigan	Washington State
Clayton Turner	Miami (Fla.)	Lamar
Jordan Tyler	Western Kentucky	Murray State
Xavier Ulutu	Fresno State	Riverside (Calif.) CC
Marquez Valdes-Scantling	N.C. State	South Florida
Brent VanderVeen*	Oregon State	
Chad Voytik*	Pittsburgh	Eastern Kentucky
Martez Walker	Central Michigan	Saint Joseph's (Ind.)
LaKeith Walls*	Illinois	UNLV
James Ward*	Wake Forest	
Kyron Watson	Kansas	Southern Illinois
Malik Watson*	San Jose State	
Davis Webb*	Texas Tech	
Vic Wharton III	Tennessee	California
Mike White	South Florida	Western Kentucky
Jhonny Williams	Notre Dame	Toledo
Jonathan Williams*	Wake Forest	
Kal-El Williams	Florida Atlantic	Independence CC
Kevin Williams*	Nebraska	
Zaire Williams	Temple	Maine
Gerald Willis	Florida	Miami (Fla.)
Priest Willis	UCLA	Texas A&M
Gary Wooten*	Penn State	Duquesne
Daquan Worley	Penn State	Duquesne
Asiantii Woulard	UCLA	South Florida
Luke Wright	Cincinnati	Kentucky
Satchel Ziffer*	Old Dominion	Boston College

*Graduate Transfer

Austin Appleby, QB, Florida

APPLEBY: NATI HARNIK / AP

TRANSFERS ELIGIBLE IN 2017

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Andrew Allen	New Mexico State	
Kyle Allen	Texas A&M	Houston
Terrence Alls	Duke	
Patrick Amara Jr.	Pittsburgh	Massachusetts
Cade Apsay	Colorado	
Tristan Bailey	Wyoming	
Jonathan Banks	Kansas State	
Ben Banogu	Louisiana-Monroe	TCU
Johnell Barnes	Duke	
Blake Bars	Michigan	
Reginald Bell	Eastern Michigan	
Tre Bell	Vanderbilt	Connecticut
D'Aundrey Bradley	North Texas	
Brandon Bridgers	Louisiana-Monroe	
Aaron Brown	Cincinnati	
Fred Brown	Mississippi State	
Luke Bussey	San Diego State	
Hatari Byrd	Oklahoma	
Kenny Carter	Syracuse	
Jarrett Cervi	Old Dominion	

PLAYER	FORMER TEAM	NEW TEAM
Jalen Christian	South Carolina	
Chris Clark	UCLA	Pittsburgh
Daniel Cobb	Cincinnati	
Brian Cole	Michigan	Kentucky
Duke Culver	Louisville	UAB
Gabriel Cunningham	New Mexico State	
Shaq Davidson	South Carolina	
Anthony Davis	Temple	
Jamal Davis	Pittsburgh	Akron
Jordan Davis	Texas A&M	Louisville
Bryce Dixon	N.C. State	
Dameko Doddles	Wyoming	
T.J. Douglas	Duke	
Amir Ealey	Syracuse	
Matt Eaton	Temple	
Berkley Edwards	Minnesota	Central Michigan
Kendrick Edwards	Arkansas	
Nick England	Old Dominion	
Bryce English	Kansas State	North Texas
Michael Epley	SMU	
Anthony Folkerts	Rutgers	
Jordan Ford	Appalachian State	
Desmond Gant	Minnesota	
Treyon Garnett	Appalachian State	
Marques Gayot	Miami (Fla.)	
Malik Gilmore	Oregon State	
Reggie Green	Pittsburgh	
Will Grier	Florida	West Virginia
Terrance Harris	Iowa	
Ernest Hawkins	South Carolina	
Alex Hayes	Syracuse	
Kalin Heath	Kansas State	
Spencer Hollie	SMU	
Luke Hollingsworth	Oregon State	
Calvain Holmes	Florida Atlantic	
Chris Holmes	Duke	
Greg Hutchins	New Mexico State	
Glen Ihenacho	Oregon	
Chris James	Pittsburgh	
Montrice Johns	New Mexico State	
David Johnson	South Carolina	
Ferrando Joseph	Louisiana-Monroe	
Coleman Key	Colorado State	Oklahoma State
Caleb Kinlaw	Wisconsin	
Frank Labady	Cincinnati	
Skylar Lacy	Louisville	
Ryan Lamb	Central Michigan	
Chris Laye	Auburn	
Tanner Lee	Tulane	Nebraska
Paul Lewis	Oklahoma State	
Tyler Luatua	Notre Dame	BYU
Josh Marriner	Connecticut	
Kalen McCain	N.C. State	
Darrien McNair	North Texas	
Jaye Miner	Florida Atlantic	
Kyler Murray	Texas A&M	Oklahoma
D.J. Neal	South Carolina	
Nick Nelson	Hawaii	
Uso Olive	Wyoming	
Jordan Preator	BYU	
Kaleb Prewett	Kansas State	
Trey Quinn	LSU	
Chase Regian	Louisiana-Monroe	
Tre Roberts	Oklahoma State	
Jojo Robinson	Arkansas	
Austin Rolfe	Tennessee	SMU
Deltron Sands	Oregon State	
Bo Schneider	UCF	Pittsburgh
Chase Schultz	Louisiana Tech	SMU
Qaadir Sheppard	Syracuse	
Freddie Simmons	N.C. State	
Darin Smalls	South Carolina	
DaMarcus Smith	North Texas	
Jake Snyder	Louisiana-Monroe	
Joshua Tapscott	Wyoming	
Raymond Taylor	Oklahoma State	
Jake Templeton	Boise State	Utah State
A.J. Turman	Georgia	
John Turner	Notre Dame	
Will Tutein	Wyoming	
Fred Ulu-Perry	UCLA	Hawaii
Tony Upchurch	LSU	
Teddy Veal	Tulane	Louisiana Tech
Troy Vincent	N.C. State	Iowa State
Sir Calvin Wallace	North Texas	
Jerome Washington	Miami (Fla.)	Rutgers
Evan White	Colorado	
Keyan Williams	Fresno State	Nebraska
Mykelti Williams	Notre Dame	
T.V. Williams	Kentucky	
Dalton Wood	Oklahoma	

Tom Herman and his Houston Cougars, here celebrating their Peach Bowl victory over Florida State, have established themselves as the team to beat in the AAC.

PROJECTED FINISH

EAST DIVISION

1. **Temple**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Birmingham Bowl
2. **South Florida**
   BOWL PROJECTION: St. Petersburg Bowl
3. **Cincinnati**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Bahamas Bowl
4. **East Carolina**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cure Bowl
5. **Connecticut**
6. **UCF**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Houston**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cotton Bowl
2. **Memphis**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Military Bowl
3. **Navy**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Armed Forces Bowl
4. **Tulsa**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Miami Beach Bowl
5. **SMU**
6. **Tulane**

Jahad Thomas, RB, Temple

Breakout 2015 established AAC as pacesetter in 'Group of 5'

BY ERIC BAILEY
Tulsa World

Tom Herman's last two football seasons have been as an offensive coordinator for Ohio State's national championship team and as head coach during the Houston Cougars' run toward a Peach Bowl victory.

En route to the New Year's Six bowl victory, the Cougars captured the American Athletic Conference championship last season. What did Herman learn about the league during his team's 13-1 season?

"I had no idea how deep it was," Herman says. "I came from a conference in the Big Ten where it was the haves and the have-nots. There were three games on your conference schedule that you had to lace them up and really prepare to go to battle. Then, at Ohio State, there were five games on the schedule where you go out and just don't want to screw it up.

"In this conference, everyone has talent and great coaches. You better bring your A-game every week or you are going to be in some trouble."

Houston navigated the conference minefield and finished No. 8 in the final *Associated Press* poll. It had the conference's marquee victory with the Peach Bowl triumph over Florida State. But that was far from the league's only impressive win. Temple defeated Penn State and nearly toppled Notre Dame. Memphis owned a victory over Sugar Bowl champion Ole Miss, while Houston shut out Vanderbilt and beat Louisville.

Three teams–Houston, Navy and Temple–had 10-win seasons. South Florida ended the season by winning seven of its final nine games. Memphis was just one win from hitting double digits in victories. Connecticut and Tulsa returned to bowl games.

The league that turns four years old this fall appears to have established itself as the dominant conference among the "Group of Five." Many of the teams have a chance to be good again.

But the team to beat is Houston, with its impressive second-year coach, a possible Heisman Trophy quarterback in Greg Ward Jr. and a tone-setting game on opening weekend when Oklahoma visits town.

CELEBRATION: JOHN BAZEMORE / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Can anyone challenge Houston?:** Keep an eye on Memphis as the AAC's West Division could come down to the regular season's final weekend when the Cougars visit the Liberty Bowl.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Barton Simmons, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Houston	19	1	2	15	191.17
2	Temple	27	0	1	16	167.56
3	UCF	22	0	0	20	165.16
4	South Florida	16	0	2	14	162.38
5	Memphis	22	0	0	17	161.76
6	SMU	25	0	0	15	151.38
7	Cincinnati	21	0	0	18	148.78
8	East Carolina	24	0	0	16	146.30
9	Tulane	24	0	0	11	137.30
10	Navy	36	0	0	13	134.14
11	Tulsa	20	0	0	10	127.52
12	Connecticut	16	0	0	10	123.67

ALL-AAC

OFFENSE

- **QB** Greg Ward Jr., Sr., Houston
- **RB** Jahad Thomas, Sr., Temple
- **RB** Marlon Mack, Jr., South Florida
- **OL** Dion Dawkins, Sr., Temple
- **OL** Andreas Knappe, Sr., Connecticut
- **OL** Deyshawn Bond, Sr., Cincinnati
- **OL** Ryan Leahy, Sr., Cincinnati
- **OL** J.T. Boyd, Sr., East Carolina
- **TE** DJ Dowdy, Sr., Cincinnati
- **WR** Zay Jones, Sr., East Carolina
- **WR** Rodney Adams, Sr., South Florida

DEFENSE

- **DL** Tanzel Smart, Sr., Tulane
- **DL** B.J. Singleton, Sr., Houston
- **DL** Folorunso Fatukasi, Jr., Connecticut
- **DL** Haason Reddick, Sr., Temple
- **LB** Nico Marley, Sr., Tulane
- **LB** Eric Wilson, Sr., Cincinnati
- **LB** Steven Taylor, Sr., Houston
- **DB** Jamar Summers, Jr., Connecticut
- **DB** Deatrick Nichols, Jr., South Florida
- **DB** Zach Edwards, Sr., Cincinnati
- **DB** Drico Johnson, Sr., UCF

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Jake Elliott, Sr., Memphis
- **P** Spencer Smith, Jr., Memphis

WARD: JOHN RAOUX / AP

NEWSMAKER

Houston QB **Greg Ward Jr.** is an electrifying athlete who fuels the Cougars' offense. Last year, he joined Clemson's Deshaun Watson as the only quarterbacks who threw for 2,000 yards and ran for 1,000. His dual-threat capability makes him dangerous and, after one season being mentored by UH coach and offensive guru Tom Herman, don't be surprised to see him have an even better 2016.

OVERRATED

CINCINNATI

The Bearcats return plenty of experience from last year's disappointing group that went from league favorites to 7-6 overall. Expectations, again, are high, but can Tommy Tuberville's team meet them?

UNDERRATED

UCONN

Solid defense was the hallmark of last year's team, which played in the St. Petersburg Bowl. If the offense can provide any help, keep a close eye on the Huskies.

2 New faces: Four new coaches will patrol the sidelines in 2016—Willie Fritz (Tulane), Scott Frost (UCF), Scottie Montgomery (East Carolina) and Mike Norvell (Memphis).

3 Gulf Coast Offense: USF finished strong last year and has its single-season record-holders at QB (Quinton Flowers), running back (Marlon Mack) and wideout (Rodney Adams) returning.

RATING THE AAC

FASTEST RECEIVER
Terrell Green, East Carolina
The speedy sophomore has been clocked at 4.33 in the 40.

BEST HANDS
Keevan Lucas, WR, Tulsa
Before missing much of last season with an injury, he had 101 receptions in 2014.

BEST PASSING QB
Dane Evans, Tulsa
The senior led the conference in passing yards per game (333.2) last season.

BEST RUNNING QB
Greg Ward Jr., Houston
The nation's leading rusher among quarterbacks finished with 21 touchdowns last season.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Marlon Mack, South Florida
Finished last season with five straight 100-yard games and hit that mark in eight of the final nine contests he played.

BEST ATHLETE
Sam Craft, ATH, Memphis
The wide receiver/running back played basketball for the Tigers during the offseason.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Trevon Brown, WR, East Carolina
Of the wide receiver's 41 catches last season, 34 came against two defenders or more.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Tanzel Smart, DT, Tulane
Smart had an impressive 15 tackles for loss from his interior position last season.

TOP FRESHMAN
Ed Oliver, DT, Houston
AAC's only five-star signee is expected to play right away.

TOP TRANSFER
Duke Catalon, RB, Houston
The University of Texas transfer should play immediately with Houston losing its top three running backs from last season.

HARDEST HITTER
Nico Marley, LB, Tulane
Opposing offenses always have an eye on Marley's whereabouts.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Daniel Awoleke, DL, South Florida
Awoleke is a former walk-on who earned a sixth year of eligibility this season.

TOP SCHOLAR
Zay Jones, WR, East Carolina
Jones owns a 3.5-plus GPA and has earned previous AAC All-Academic honors.

BEST INTERVIEW
Willie Taggart, head coach, South Florida
The down-to-earth coach never wavers in his positive attitude.

BEST COACH
Tom Herman, Houston
One year he is national champion Ohio State's offensive coordinator. The next, he's guiding UH to a Peach Bowl triumph.

COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Phil Snow, Temple
The veteran coach has significantly improved the defense each season he has been there, which aided the Owls' 10-4 campaign last season.

HOTTEST SEAT
Tommy Tuberville, Cincinnati
Perhaps the seat is only lukewarm, but definite improvement is needed after a disappointing 2015.

LOUDEST STADIUM
Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, East Carolina
There's nothing like hearing 50,000 fans cheering to "Purple Haze" when the Pirates take the field.

TEMPLE
OWLS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Jahad Thomas

Could 2016 be the year of the Owl?

Temple took the American Athletic Conference by storm last season with a 10-win campaign and an appearance in the league championship game. Expectations have now gone to winning league titles and bowl games.

Fourth-year coach Matt Rhule has the Owls playing with confidence and, despite seeing some key leadership graduate, others are ready to step in to carry momentum.

The offense will flow through quarterback P.J. Walker. The senior is already the school's career leader in completions (601) and touchdowns (52) and is just 121 yards shy of the all-time passing mark of 7,495 yards.

Running back Jahad Thomas, a first-team all-conference selection, finished with 1,262 rushing yards and 17 touchdowns last season. A former defensive back, he has excelled at his "new" position the last two years.

Rhule will be looking for new starters at wide receiver after three of the top four players exhausted their eligibility there last season. Ventell Bryant (39 catches, 579 yards, 3 TDs) had an outstanding freshman season and will be asked to maintain his consistency. Senior Romond Deloatch will be the group's veteran. Pitt transfer Adonis Jennings must be closely watched.

Temple's defense must replace Tyler Matakevich, a linebacker who was a consensus All-America selection and won the Chuck Bednarik Award and Bronko Naguski Trophy.

There will be candidates to take over, including defensive end Haason Reddick, who posted 46 tackles and five sacks to claim all-conference honors. Praise Martin-Oguike will also fortify the Owls' front four.

There's no easy way to fill Matakevich's spot at linebacker. Senior Jarred Alwan will try to take over the role after coming up with 74 tackles and 1.5 sacks last season. Redshirt seniors Stephaun Marshall and Avery Williams will also try to build off solid 2015 campaigns.

The secondary's veteran is cornerback Sean Chandler, who led all Owl defensive backs with 66 tackles, four interceptions and 10 pass breakups last year. Nate L. Smith is the only safety with experience in the past two seasons. He had seven starts last year. Khiry Lucas is the only other upperclassman at the position.

Time will tell if the Owls can springboard off a 2015 campaign that included four weeks in the Top 25 and a spot in the AAC title game. The nonconference schedule is manageable outside a trip to Penn State, which will be looking for revenge after losing to Temple last year. The Owls own bragging rights against every league foe in the regular season outside of USF, with that Oct. 21 game perhaps playing a big role in deciding the division champ.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Army	
S.10	Stony Brook	
S.17	@PENN STATE	27-10
S.24	Charlotte	37-3
O.1	SMU	60-40
O.6	@MEMPHIS	31-12
O.15	@UCF	30-16
O.21	South Florida	23-44
O.29	Cincinnati	34-26
N.4	@CONNECTICUT	27-3
N.19	@TULANE	49-10
N.26	East Carolina	24-14

COACH

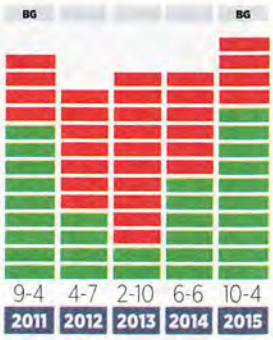
Matt Rhule
Fourth year (18-20)
CAREER RECORD: 18-20

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Glenn Thomas (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Phil Snow (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-4
(Lost to Toledo in the Boca Raton Bowl, 32-17)
STADIUM: Lincoln Financial Field (69,176)
TICKETS: 215-204-8499
SITE: Philadelphia
WEBSITE: owlsports.com
TWITTER: @Temple_FB

5-YEAR RECORD
31-31



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**P.J. Walker** (5-11, 205, Sr.)
FB	**Nick Sharga** (6-2, 240, Jr.)
RB	**Jahad Thomas** (5-10, 188, Sr.)
LT	**Dion Dawkins** (6-5, 320, Sr.)
LG	**Semaj Reed** (6-5, 290, Jr.)
C	**Brendan McGowan** (6-3, 298, Sr.)
RG	**Brian Carter** (6-1, 304, Jr.)
RT	**Leon Johnson** (6-5, 320, Jr.)
TE	**Colin Thompson** (6-4, 255, Sr.)
WR	**Ventell Bryant** (6-3, 189, So.)
WR	**Romond Deloatch** (6-4, 220, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Praise Martin-Oguike** (6-1, 255, Sr.)
DT	**Michael Dogbe** (6-3, 280, So.)
DT	**Averee Robinson** (6-0, 285, Sr.)
DE	**Haason Reddick** (6-1, 230. Sr.)
LB	**Stephaun Marshall** (5-11, 206, Sr.)
LB	**Jarred Alwan** (5-11, 229, Sr.)
LB	**Avery Williams** (5-10, 224, Sr.)
CB	**Sean Chandler** (6-0, 190, Jr.)
CB	**Nate Hairston** (6-0, 193, Sr.)
S	**Delvon Randall** (5-11, 208, So.)
S	**Nate L. Smith** (6-0, 188, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Austin Jones** (5-10, 205, Jr.)
P	**Alex Starzyk** (6-2, 226, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

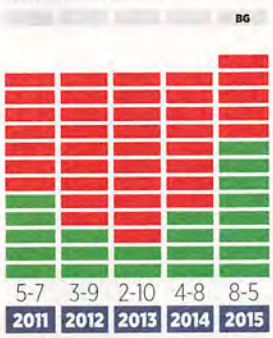
1 **Karamo Dioubate,** DT ★★★★
2 **Greg Webb,** DT ★★★
3 **Anthony Russo,** QB ★★★

Building off of a breakout season, Temple landed some prospects it would typically never be able to even sniff. The highlights include defensive tackle Karamo Dioubate, who decommitted from Penn State to pick the Owls, and Elite 11 quarterback Anthony Russo, who decommitted from Rutgers for Temple. Junior-college defensive tackle Greg Webb also reneged on an earlier commitment to the Scarlet Knights to sign with the Owls.

THOMAS: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP

SOUTH FLORIDA
BULLS

5-YEAR RECORD
22-39



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Quinton Flowers** (6-0, 210, Jr.)
RB	**Marlon Mack** (6-0, 205, Jr.)
LT	**Kofi Amichia** (6-4, 290, Sr.)
LG	**Cameron Ruff** (6-3, 309, Jr.)
C	**Michael Galati** (6-3, 288, So.)
RG	**Dominique Threatt** (6-1, 315, Sr.)
RT	**Billy Atterbury** (6-4, 295, Fr.)
TE	**Mitchell Wilcox** (6-4, 236, Fr.)
WR	**Rodney Adams** (6-1, 190, Sr.)
WR	**Chris Barr** (5-10, 175, So.)
WR	**M. Valdes-Scantling** (6-3, 203, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Juwuan Brown** (6-2, 248, So.)
DT	**Kevin Bronson** (6-4, 271, So.)
DT	**Deadrin Senat** (6-1, 305, Jr.)
DE	**LaDarrius Jackson** (6-4, 245, Jr.)
LB	**Auggie Sanchez** (6-2, 244, Jr.)
LB	**Nigel Harris** (6-0, 231, Sr.)
DB	**Nate Godwin** (5-10, 204, Sr.)
CB	**Deatrick Nichols** (5-10, 189, Jr.)
CB	**Ronnie Hoggins** (5-8, 167, So.)
S	**Tajee Fullwood** (6-2, 203, Jr.)
S	**Devin Abraham** (5-9, 186, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Emilio Nadelman** (5-6, 173, Jr.)
P	**Mike Ruggles** (6-6, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Darnell Salomon,** WR ★★★★
2. **Craig Watts,** S ★★★★
3. **Tramal Ivy,** DE ★★★

Remember the name Andre Polk. He was the steal of the class for a South Florida haul full of steals. Polk is 6-3, with safety athleticism and the body to grow into a linebacker. Playmaking safety Craig Watts and big, physical receiver Darnell Salomon could've gone to a host of Power Five schools but chose USF.

MACK: LYNNE SLADKY / AP

RB **Marlon Mack**

"Just trust the process."

That's been the message of South Florida coach Willie Taggart, who some believed could be on the hot seat following two losing seasons and a 1-3 start to the 2015 campaign.

Taggart believed in his football program, which won seven of its final nine games and participated in its first bowl game in five years.

The Bulls will ride a wave of confidence this season, knowing that they defeated every AAC East opponent last year and return the school's single-season record-holders at quarterback (Quinton Flowers), running back (Marlon Mack) and wide receiver (Rodney Adams).

The defense returns seven of its top nine tacklers, including leading tackler and all-conference linebacker Auggie Sanchez.

It's safe to say expectations are high in Tampa this season.

Taggart's "Gulf Coast Offense" averaged 542.3 yards and 47 points per game during the final four games of 2015. Running the show was Flowers, who threw a program-best 22 touchdown passes and raced for 991 yards.

For the first time in four seasons, the Bulls have an established quarterback entering a season, and Flowers will have weapons at his disposal.

Mack has been a special running back since arriving on campus. The junior set a single-season record in 2015 with 1,381 rushing yards and averaged 6.6 yards per carry. He eclipsed the 100-yard mark on nine occasions. Adams, who like Mack grew up in the Tampa Bay area, had a breakout year with a single-season record of 822 receiving yards and nine touchdowns.

Sanchez will be the centerpiece of the Bulls' 4-2-5 defensive scheme. The linebacker led the team with 117 tackles last season, and is the conference's top returning tackler.

The secondary is stocked with four returning starters. The group ranked 14th nationally with 17 interceptions. First-team All-AAC cornerback Deatrick Nichols returns. He had four interceptions and five passes broken up last season.

The schedule sets up favorably for the Bulls, who open with home games against Towson and Northern Illinois before traveling to Syracuse (a team they beat 45-24 last season). The opening month's measuring-stick game will be against Florida State in one of the program's biggest home contests in recent history.

If the Bulls are able to duplicate their five-victory total against American East division teams, look for them to make their first league championship game.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Towson	
S.10	Northern Illinois	
S.17	@SYRACUSE	45-24
S.24	Florida State	14-34
O.1	@CINCINNATI	65-27
O.8	East Carolina	22-17
O.15	Connecticut	28-20
O.21	@TEMPLE	44-23
O.28	Navy	17-29
N.12	@MEMPHIS	17-24
N.19	@SMU	38-14
N.26	UCF	44-3

COACH

Willie Taggart
Fourth year (14-23)
CAREER RECORD: 30-43

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Darren Hiller, T.J. Weist (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Raymond Woodie (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Western Kentucky in the Miami Beach Bowl, 45-35)
STADIUM: Raymond James Stadium (65,890)
TICKETS: 800-GO-BULLS
SITE: Tampa
WEBSITE: gousfbulls.com
TWITTER: @USFFootball

3 CINCINNATI BEARCATS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Tennessee-Martin	
S.10	@PURDUE	
S.15	Houston	30-33
S.24	Miami (Ohio)	37-33
O.1	South Florida	27-65
O.8	@CONNECTICUT	37-13
O.22	East Carolina	19-16
O.29	@TEMPLE	26-34
N.5	BYU	24-38
N.12	@UCF	52-7
N.18	Memphis	46-53
N.25	@TULSA	49-38

COACH

Tommy Tuberville
Fourth year (25-14)
CAREER RECORD: 155-91

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Zac Taylor (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Robert Prunty (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to San Diego State in the Hawaii Bowl, 42-7)
STADIUM: Nippert Stadium (40,000)
TICKETS: 877-CATS-TIX
SITE: Cincinnati
WEBSITE: gobearcats.com
TWITTER: @GoBearcatsFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Gunner Kiel (6-4, 215, Sr.)
RB	Tion Green (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LT	Korey Cunningham (6-6, 305, Jr.)
LG	Idarius Ray (6-6, 312, Sr.)
C	Deyshawn Bond (6-1, 291, Sr.)
RG	Ryan Leahy (6-6, 292, Sr.)
RT	Ryan Stout (6-6, 285, So.)
TE	DJ Dowdy (6-4, 248, Sr.)
WR	Kahlil Lewis (6-0, 197, So.)
WR	Nate Cole (6-1, 202, Sr.)
WR	Devin Gray (6-0, 181, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Kimoni Fitz (6-3, 243, So.)
DT	Cortez Broughton (6-2, 297, So.)
DT	Alex Pace (6-2, 295, Sr.)
DE	Mark Wilson (6-3, 246, Jr.)
LB	Eric Wilson (6-2, 219, Sr.)
LB	Bryce Jenkinson (6-1, 235, So.)
LB	Mike Tyson (6-2, 206, Sr.)
CB	Linden Stephens (6-0, 180, Jr.)
CB	Grant Coleman (6-0, 171, Jr.)
S	Tyrell Gilbert (6-1, 195, So.)
S	Zach Edwards (6-1, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andrew Gantz (5-9, 170, Jr.)
P	Sam Geraci (6-4, 222, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

Cincinnati had high expectations entering the 2015 football season. Many picked the program to be the American Athletic Conference champion, but the Bearcats were plagued with inconsistent play, turnovers and penalties.

Tuberville

All were things that burned veteran coach Tommy Tuberville, who returns for his fourth season in the Queen City.

Tuberville expects UC to be much better than last year's 7-6 squad. Why? The team's experience will play a big factor.

"We've got more depth," Tuberville says. "We've got better younger guys. We just don't have a lot of older players. We've got 18 seniors this year, which is pretty good. Twelve of them I recruited, so that ought to tell you something."

The offense was efficient, especially throwing the football under quarterback Gunner Kiel. The senior returns for his final season after throwing for 277.7 yards per game last season.

New faces will need to emerge in the passing attack, as six seniors were lost at wide receiver. First-year offensive coordinator Zac Taylor will try to fill in the spots with little-used Nate Cole, Tshumbi Johnson, Kahlil Lewis and junior-college transfer Devin Gray.

The defense returns the majority of the 2015 squad, which could bode well against the high-flying offenses in the AAC. Linebacker Eric Wilson had a team-best 106 tackles and will be the centerpiece of a defense looking to improve after giving up 30-plus points on eight different occasions last year.

The Bearcats' first two conference games will be tough (Houston, USF), but if they get past those home contests, it could set up a special 2016.

4 EAST CAROLINA PIRATES

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Western Carolina	
S.10	N.C. State	
S.17	@SOUTH CAROLINA	
S.24	@VIRGINIA TECH	35-28
O.1	UCF	44-7
O.8	@SOUTH FLORIDA	17-22
O.13	Navy	21-45
O.22	@CINCINNATI	16-19
O.29	Connecticut	13-31
N.5	@TULSA	30-17
N.12	SMU	49-23
N.26	@TEMPLE	14-24

COACH

Scottie Montgomery
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tony Petersen (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kenwick Thompson (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium (50,000)
TICKETS: 252-737-4500
SITE: Greenville, N.C.
WEBSITE: ecupirates.com
TWITTER: @ECUPiratesFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Kurt Benkert (6-3, 225, Jr.)
RB	Anthony Scott (5-9, 187, Jr.)
LT	Messiah Rice (6-5, 298, So.)
LG	Garrett McGhin (6-6, 307, So.)
C	Christian Matau (6-3, 334, Jr.)
RG	J.T. Boyd (6-4, 298, Sr.)
RT	Brandon Smith (6-8, 341, Jr.)
TE	Stephen Baggett (6-5, 232, Jr.)
WR	Davon Grayson (6-2, 195, Sr.)
WR	Zay Jones (6-1, 197, Sr.)
WR	Trevon Brown (6-2, 210, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Fred Presley (6-3, 271, Sr.)
DT	Demetri McGill (6-1, 314, Sr.)
DE	Darius Commissiong (6-2, 305, Jr.)
LB	Yiannis Bowden (6-5, 225, So.)
LB	Joe Carter (6-2, 222, So.)
LB	Jordan Williams (6-0, 230, Jr.)
LB	Joe Allely (6-1, 230, Jr.)
CB	DaShaun Amos (6-1, 189, Sr.)
CB	Corey Seargent (6-0, 180, So.)
S	Terrell Richardson (6-0, 211, Sr.)
S	Travon Simmons (5-10, 185, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Davis Plowman (5-10, 193, Sr.)
P	Worth Gregory (6-3, 209, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

There will be plenty of new faces roaming the East Carolina sideline this season, including new head coach Scottie Montgomery.

Montgomery, who spent the last two seasons as Duke's associate head coach, took over for the popular Ruffin McNeill. There will be a new attitude surrounding the program, with a stress on fundamentals and team discipline.

Montgomery

There will also be an overhaul of the offensive philosophy. Gone is the run-and-gun style. The Pirates will look for more of a pro-style attack.

The key will be finding someone to orchestrate the offense. Kurt Benkert was the projected starter at quarterback in 2015 before suffering an ACL injury in fall camp. His setback was a sign of things to come, as the Pirates finished 5-7 and missed postseason play for only the second time in 10 years.

Look for Rutgers transfer Philip Nelson to try to gain some snaps at quarterback and compete with Benkert.

A new running back must be targeted, and there will be pressure on senior wide receiver Zay Jones (98 catches, 1,099 yards, 5 TDs) to be a special playmaker this season.

The offensive line will be rebuilt with three new starters, but right guard J.T. Boyd will be the team's anchor.

Linebacker Jordan Williams is the team's top returning tackler. Other defensive leaders will be cornerback DaShaun Amos, free safety Travon Simmons and end Fred Presley.

The Pirates begin the Montgomery Era with a solid nonconference schedule that includes games against N.C. State (home) as well as South Carolina and Virginia Tech (road) in September. Those three games–which follow an opener against Western Carolina–could set the season's tone.

TUBERVILLE: GARY LANDERS / AP; MONTGOMERY: AMY SANCETTA / AP

5 UCONN HUSKIES

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Maine	
S.10	@NAVY	18-28
S.17	Virginia	
S.24	Syracuse	
S.29	@HOUSTON	20-17
O.8	Cincinnati	13-37
O.15	@SOUTH FLORIDA	20-28
O.22	UCF	40-13
O.29	@EAST CAROLINA	31-13
N.4	Temple	3-27
N.19	@BOSTON COLLEGE	
N.26	Tulane	7-3

COACH

Bob Diaco
Third year (8-17)
CAREER RECORD: 8-17

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Frank Verducci (second year)
Mike Cummings (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Anthony Poindexter (third year)
Vincent Brown (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Marshall in the St. Petersburg Bowl, 16-10)
STADIUM: Rentschler Field (40,642)
TICKETS: 877-AT-UCONN
SITE: Storrs, Conn.
WEBSITE: uconnhuskies.com
TWITTER: @UConnFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Bryant Shirreffs** (6-2, 220, Jr.)
RB	**Arkeel Newsome** (5-7, 180, Jr.)
LT	**Richard Levy** (6-6, 316, Sr.)
LG	**Tommy Hopkins** (6-6, 316, Jr.)
C	**Ryan Crozier** (6-4, 296, So.)
RG	**Steve Hashemi** (6-6, 285, Jr.)
RT	**Andreas Knappe** (6-8, 319, Sr.)
TE	**Alec Bloom** (6-6, 257, Jr.)
TE	**Chris Lee** (6-7, 257, So.)
WR	**Noel Thomas** (6-1, 199, Sr.)
WR	**Tyraiq Beals** (6-0, 183, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**James Atkins** (6-5, 278, So.)
DT	**Folorunso Fatukasi** (6-4, 310, Jr.)
DT	**Mikal Myers** (6-1, 325, Sr.)
DE	**Cameron Stapleton** (6-4, 252, Jr.)
LB	**Vontae Diggs** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
LB	**Junior Joseph** (6-1, 242, Jr.)
LB	**Luke Carrezola** (6-3, 260, Jr.)
CB	**Jhavon Williams** (5-10, 190, Sr.)
CB	**Jamar Summers** (6-0, 185, Jr.)
S	**Brice McAllister** (5-11, 193, Jr.)
S	**Obi Melifonwu** (6-3, 216, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Bobby Puyol** (5-10, 180, Sr.)
P	**Justin Wain** (6-3, 216, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

A football program can sometimes reach that fork-in-the-road area in a head coach's third season. Is the team making progress since the hire? Is it time for the athletic director to think about his next list of candidates?

Diaco

UConn coach Bob Diaco enters his third season in 2016. If last year is any indication, the Huskies are headed in the right direction.

The program advanced to a bowl game for only the sixth time in school history (a 16-10 loss to Marshall in the St. Petersburg Bowl). It also owned the only victory against Peach Bowl champion Houston last season (20-17).

The team was based on the defense, which is little surprise since Diaco moved to Storrs after a successful run as Notre Dame's defensive coordinator.

The majority of a unit that ranked 15th in both scoring defense and turnover margin returns in 2016.

The key is to find ways to match that success on the other side of the football. Lighting up the scoreboard was an issue last season. Only twice did the team score more than 22 points.

Quarterback Bryant Shirreffs (2,078 passing yards in 2015) is the incumbent quarterback, but the junior only threw for nine touchdowns against eight interceptions last year.

Arkeel Newsome may be the biggest threat on offense. The junior running back ran for a team-best 792 yards and added 465 receiving yards (second most on the team). He was also the team's primary kickoff returner.

The defense will be led by linebacker Junior Joseph, who is the top returning tackler with 93 stops.

The team's defense will keep UConn in football games, but a massive swing on offense is needed to compete for a conference championship.

DIACO: RICK BOWMER / AP

6 UCF KNIGHTS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	South Carolina State	
S.10	@MICHIGAN	
S.17	Maryland	
S.24	@FLORIDA INTL.	14-15
O.1	@EAST CAROLINA	7-44
O.7	Tulane	31-45
O.15	Temple	16-30
O.22	@CONNECTICUT	13-40
O.29	@HOUSTON	10-59
N.12	Cincinnati	7-52
N.19	Tulsa	30-45
N.26	@SOUTH FLORIDA	3-44

COACH

Scott Frost
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Troy Walters (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Erik Chinander (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 0-12
STADIUM: Bright House Networks Stadium (44,206)
TICKETS: 407-UCF-1000
SITE: Orlando
WEBSITE: ucfknights.com
TWITTER: @UCF_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Justin Holman** (6-4, 213, Sr.)
RB	**C.J. Jones** (5-10, 216, So.)
LT	**Aaron Evans** (6-5, 290, Jr.)
LG	**Tyler Hudanick** (6-5, 294, So.)
C	**Jason Rae** (5-11, 292, Sr.)
RG	**Luke Palmer** (6-3, 302, So.)
RT	**Wyatt Miller** (6-4, 293, So.)
TE	**Jordan Akins** (6-3, 237, So.)
WR	**Tre'Quan Smith** (6-1, 201, So.)
WR	**Tristan Payton** (6-0, 185, So.)
WR	**D'erren Wilson** (6-3, 175, So.)

DEFENSE

DL	**Jamiyus Pittman** (6-0, 300, Jr.)
DL	**Tony Guerad** (6-3, 290, Jr.)
DL	**Monte Taylor** (6-3, 270, Sr.)
LB	**Titus Davis** (6-2, 230, Fr.)
LB	**Chequan Burkett** (6-2, 228, Jr.)
LB	**Mark Rucker** (5-9, 213, Sr.)
LB	**Shaquem Griffin** (6-1, 205, Jr.)
CB	**Shaquill Griffin** (6-1, 192, Sr.)
CB	**D.J. Killings** (6-0, 186, Sr.)
S	**Drico Johnson** (6-1, 207, Sr.)
S	**Tre Neal** (6-1, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Matthew Wright** (6-1, 179, So.)
P	**Caleb Houston** (6-1, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

UCF hopes history can repeat itself in 2016.

The last time the Knights had a winless campaign was 2004, when they went 0-11 in George O'Leary's inaugural season as coach. One year later, UCF stormed to a conference championship game and ended with an 8-5 record.

Enter Scott Frost, who replaced O'Leary during the offseason as head coach. While a run at an American Athletic Conference championship following last year's 0-12 campaign may be difficult, the change could provide the boost this program needs.

Frost was offensive coordinator at high-scoring Oregon for the past three seasons before accepting his first head-coaching position. The good news is he will have plenty of experienced players returning in his rookie year. The not-so-good news is the same personnel hasn't celebrated a victory since 2014 and possessed the nation's worst offense last year.

The most important player in the new offense will be at quarterback, where a five-player logjam spent the spring looking for practice reps. Frost won't name a starter until fall camp, but expect seniors Justin Holman (incumbent) and Nick Patti (who played wide receiver last season) to lead the pack.

Every wide receiver who caught a pass last season returns for the Knights, and the position is led by sophomore Tre'Quan Smith (52 catches, 724 yards, 4 TDs). Ten players return on offense, including leading rusher C.J. Jones.

The defense needs more bite after finishing 113th nationally. Defensive coordinator Erik Chinander inherits seven of the team's top eight returning tacklers and the unit will be anchored by linebacker Chequan Burkett and tackle Jamiyus Pittman.

Patience will be critical for UCF, but it may not take long for the school to rebuild behind an enthusiastic coach and a prime recruiting region.

HOUSTON
COUGARS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

14
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Greg Ward Jr.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Oklahoma*	
S.10	Lamar	
S.15	@CINCINNATI	33-30
S.24	@TEXAS STATE	59-14
S.29	Connecticut	17-20
O.8	@NAVY	52-31
O.15	Tulsa	38-24
O.22	@SMU	49-28
O.29	UCF	59-10
N.12	Tulane	42-7
N.17	Louisville	34-31
N.25	@MEMPHIS	35-34

*At NRG Stadium

COACH

Tom Herman
Second year (13-1)
CAREER RECORD: 13-1

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Major Applewhite (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Craig Naivar (second year)
Todd Orlando (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 13-1
(Beat Florida State in the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl, 38-24)
STADIUM: TDECU Stadium (40,000)
TICKETS: 877-COUGAR-5
SITE: Houston
WEBSITE: uhcougars.com
TWITTER: @UHCougarFB

Oh, what a season the Houston Cougars had in 2015.

The program captured a New Year's Six postseason win over Florida State in the Peach Bowl. The 13-win season came alongside an American Athletic Conference championship. Coach Tom Herman's success was widely noticed and quarterback Greg Ward Jr. built a candidacy for a Heisman Trophy run in 2016.

Ask Herman about 2015, though, and he'll shift topics as swiftly as his quarterback dodges opposing defenders. The past is in the past and, while enjoyed, there's much more work in front of this team.

"We can certainly learn a lot of lessons from last year, what this team accomplished and how they accomplished it," Herman says. "Winning the Peach Bowl and finishing eighth in the country will do nothing for us in 2016. But the lesson we learned is how we got there. I tell the guys all the time that we didn't fall onto the winner's stage at the Peach Bowl. It was a year's worth of hard work, sacrifice, blood, sweat and tears."

The 12 months between spring football camp in 2015 and 2016 were complete opposites. Herman said the team was fairly undisciplined and had a culture of non-accountability when he arrived. But things quickly shifted under Herman's leadership.

"He's brought a culture that can't be turned around," says defensive end Cameron Malveaux. "He's brought the culture of hard-nosed football–you get everything that you earn."

The Cougars get a chance to set the tone in the season opener against Oklahoma in the AdvoCare Kickoff Classic at Houston's NRG Stadium. A win could rocket the team up the polls and could perhaps place the Cougars in charge of their destiny.

The Sooners, a College Football Playoff participant in 2015, typically have problems

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Greg Ward Jr.**

The senior from Tyler, Texas, broke out in a big way last season using his strong right arm and his feet equally well. Ward completed 67.2 percent of his passes for 2,828 yards and 17 touchdowns while leading Houston in rushing yards (1,108) and rushing touchdowns (21). His list of honors last year—Earl Campbell Award winner, Manning Award finalist, Davey O'Brien semifinalist, Maxwell Award semifinalist—should have him well positioned to make a strong run at the 2016 Heisman. At 5-11 and 185 pounds, the converted wideout is on the smaller end of the quarterback spectrum, but his athleticism, speed (4.4 seconds in the 40), elusiveness and arm more than make up for what he lacks in size.

WARD: TIMOTHY D. EASLEY / AP

with dual-threat quarterbacks. Clemson's Deshaun Watson perplexed the Sooners in the CFP semifinals at the Orange Bowl last year.

Houston has a mirror image at quarterback. Ward joined Watson as the only quarterbacks to throw for 2,000 yards and rush for at least 1,000 yards last season. The Cougars' quarterback broke 14 school or conference records in guiding Houston to a 13-1 mark in 2015.

How does he get better during his senior season?

"By preparing every day to become a better quarterback," Herman says. "He's a leader and a tremendous athlete who understands the game of football really well. We'd like him to get better at making quicker decisions and perhaps being a little more vocal."

He'll have talented wide receivers to target, with four of the top five players at the position returning. Senior Chance Allen (56 catches, 752 yards, 6 TDs) leads the way. Steven Dunbar may make an impact, and Oklahoma State transfer Ra'Shaad Samples will be eligible.

Running back Duke Catalon, a transfer from the University of Texas, also reaches eligible status. Herman will look for an immediate contribution from him.

While Houston's potent offense draws attention, its defense helped the program reach new heights last season. The Cougars ranked 20th in scoring defense and eighth in rushing defense. The defensive line lost only one starter and it will be anchored by seniors B.J. Singleton and Malveaux. The linebackers also lost only one starter and welcome back three of four regulars, including senior Steven Taylor, who had 92 tackles and led the AAC with 10 sacks.

New faces will have to surface in a secondary that fueled 25 of the team's 35 takeaways last season. Cornerback Brandon Wilson, who had 58 tackles, will be looked at in a leadership role this year.

The question most asked to Herman heading into this season is what can the program do for an encore. Expectations are high, as many have picked the Cougars to repeat as league champions.

"The record might not show it, but we might be a better team; or we might have a better record and not be as good a team," Herman says. "The record is a little bit irrelevant to what kind of team that you have.

"But from a big-picture standpoint, all we want to do is compete for and win our conference championship in the month of November because we know we've separated ourselves as a conference to the point where, barring Boise State going undefeated or some miraculous season by another team, that really the winner of the American Athletic Conference will go to a New Year's Six bowl game."

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

This was the best Group-of-Five recruiting class in several years. Coach Tom Herman was able to convince five-star defensive tackle Ed Oliver to play for his hometown school and that triggered a strong effort the rest of the way. Wide receiver Courtney Lark and athlete D'Eriq King were two of the other premier names that jumped on board.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Ed Oliver,** DT ★★★★★
2. **Courtney Lark,** WR ★★★★
3. **Na'Ty Rodgers,** OT ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Greg Ward Jr.

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
14	148.9	232-345-6	67.2	2828	17	202.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Greg Ward Jr.	14	198	1108	5.6	21	79.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Chance Allen	14	56	752	13.4	6	53.7

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Steven Taylor	14	61	31	92

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Steven Taylor	14	10.0	77

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Steven Taylor	2	30	15.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

Lacking a symbol for the football team, Houston adopted an oil field warning siren in 1991 to play after each Cougar score. Known as "The Blaze," the siren represents Houston's ties to the petroleum industry and is named after David Carl Blazek, an avid U of H supporter who passed away the summer before the siren arrived at the university.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	HOU	OPP
SCORING	566	290
Points Per Game	40.4	20.7
FIRST DOWNS	332	253
Rushing	157	84
Passing	149	151
Penalty	26	18
RUSHING YARDAGE	3301	1524
Yards gained rushing	3660	1938
Yards lost rushing	359	414
Rushing Attempts	669	480
Average Per Rush	4.9	3.2
Average Per Game	235.8	108.9
TDs Rushing	46	16
PASSING YARDAGE	3477	3846
Comp-Att-Int	285-432-7	278-500-21
Average Per Pass	8.0	7.7
Average Per Catch	12.2	13.8
Average Per Game	248.4	274.7
TDs Passing	22	20
TOTAL OFFENSE	6778	5370
Total Plays	1101	980
Average Per Play	6.2	5.5
Average Per Game	484.1	383.6
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	33-777	68-1389
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	29-302	16-35
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	21-342	7-67
KICK RETURN AVG.	23.5	20.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.4	2.2
INT RETURN AVG.	16.3	9.6
FUMBLES-LOST	19-7	21-14
PENALTIES-YARDS	85-783	96-768
Average Per Game	55.9	54.9
PUNTS-YARDS	64-2584	86-3603
Average Per Punt	40.4	41.9
Net punt average	38.9	37.5
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:20	28:40
3RD-DOWN CONV.	117/232	79/211
3rd-Down Pct.	50%	37%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/26	8/17
4th-Down Pct.	50%	47%
SACKS BY-YARDS	36-274	28-160
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	75	36
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-17	12-18
ATTENDANCE	271836	143916
Games/Avg Per Game	8/33980	5/28783
Neutral Site Games		1/71007

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
HOUSTON	105	178	141	142	0	566
Opponent	68	75	45	102	0	290

5-YEAR RECORD 47-19

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Greg Ward Jr.** (5-11, 185, Sr.)
	Kyle Postma (6-3, 205, Jr.)
RB	**Duke Catalon** (6-0, 210, So.)
	Mulbah Car (5-11, 194, Fr.)
LT	**Na'Ty Rodgers** (6-5, 292, Jr.)
	Jarrid Williams (6-6, 290, Fr.)
LG	**Kameron Eloph** (6-3, 294, So.)
	Mason Denley (6-4, 305, So.)
C	**Will Noble** (6-4, 290, So.)
	Colton Freeman (6-4, 300, So.)
RG	**Colton Freeman** (6-4, 300, So.)
	Mason Denley (6-4, 305, So.)
RT	**Josh Jones** (6-5, 280, Fr.)
	Marcus Oliver (6-3, 295, Jr.)
TE	**Tyler McCloskey** (6-2, 245, Sr.)
	Romello Brooker (6-4, 240, So.)
WR	**Chance Allen** (6-3, 215, Sr.)
	Isaiah Johnson (6-4, 205, So.)
WR	**Ra'Shaad Samples** (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	John Leday (6-0, 200, Jr.)
WR	**Steven Dunbar** (6-3, 210, Jr.)
	Linell Bonner (6-0, 202, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Nick Thurman** (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Ed Oliver (6-2, 290, Fr.)
DT	**B.J. Singleton** (6-4, 314, Sr.)
	Jerard Carter (6-3, 297, So.)
DE	**Cameron Malveaux** (6-6, 270, Sr.)
	Zach Vaughan (6-4, 270, So.)
LB	**Tyus Bowser** (6-3, 240, Sr.)
	Ralph Harvey Jr. (6-2, 245, Sr.)
LB	**Matthew Adams** (6-1, 230, Jr.)
	Emeke Egbule (6-3, 230, So.)
LB	**Emeke Egbule** (6-3, 230, So.)
	D'Juan Hines (6-1, 225, Jr.)
LB	**Steven Taylor** (6-1, 225, Sr.)
	Davonte Thomas (6-1, 220, Sr.)
CB	**Howard Wilson** (6-1, 185, Jr.)
	Jeremy Winchester (6-0, 190, So.)
CB	**Brandon Wilson** (5-11, 200, Sr.)
	Joeal Williams (5-10, 185, So.)
S	**Garrett Davis** (6-1, 200, So.)
	J.J. Dallas (6-0, 200, So.)
S	**Khalil Williams** (6-0, 200, Jr.)
	Terrell Williams (6-3, 210, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Ty Cummings** (6-0, 185, Sr.)
P	**Blake Boyles** (6-1, 255, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

MEMPHIS
TIGERS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Doroland Dorceus

A new era of Memphis football will take the field in 2016.

The school introduces a new head coach, Mike Norvell, a longtime assistant who had been widely considered a candidate for many jobs over the past few seasons. He takes over for Justin Fuente, who revitalized the Tigers' football program and turned it into the head-coaching job at Virginia Tech.

Norvell, a former Arizona State assistant, has learned under successful coaches like Todd Graham and Auburn's Gus Malzahn. He promises an uptempo offensive attack alongside a defense centered on fundamentals.

"Our expectations are to try to develop an identity of what we are going to be about," Norvell says.

Norvell has many of the offensive tools needed to be successful but needs to focus on one key position: quarterback.

Gone is Paxton Lynch, who guided the Tigers to 19 victories over the past two seasons, including a 9-4 campaign in 2015. His replacement under center will be junior-college transfer Riley Ferguson, senior Jason Stewart or redshirt freshman Brady Davis.

Ferguson, a one-time Tennessee enrollee, threw for 326.9 yards per game and 35 touchdowns at Coffeyville (Kan.) Community College last fall and is considered the front-runner.

The new quarterback's top targets will be wide receivers Anthony Miller (47 catches, 694 yards, 5 TDs) and Phil Mayhue (51 receptions, 670 yards), who is a former walk-on. Tight end Daniel Montiel, who had 10 catches for 155 yards and three touchdowns last year, could see an expanded role under Norvell.

The signal-caller also will be joined in the backfield by an experienced running back. Doroland Dorceus rushed for a team-high 661 yards and eight touchdowns in 2015.

While most of the attention will be placed on Memphis' offense, Norvell is paying close attention to the defense.

"I want to see how the defense is tracking the ball," Norvell says. "I want see guys focused on fundamentals because fundamentals help them make the play."

New defensive coordinator Chris Ball will have some leaders on his defense. Linebackers Shareef White and Jackson Dillon will have high expectations. White was second on the roster with 63 tackles last year. Dillon, who started 12 of 13 games, ended with 37 stops.

The Tigers will have a special-teams advantage in nearly every game. Kicker Jake Elliott was a second-team All-American last year, while punter Spencer Smith was a first-team All-AAC selection.

The big game on Memphis' schedule is the Nov. 25 regular-season finale against visiting Houston in a contest that could determine the league's West Division champion.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	SE Missouri State	
S.17	Kansas	55-23
S.24	Bowling Green	44-41
O.1	@OLE MISS	37-24
O.6	Temple	12-31
O.14	@TULANE	41-13
O.22	@NAVY	20-45
O.29	Tulsa	66-42
N.5	@SMU	63-0
N.12	South Florida	24-17
N.18	@CINCINNATI	53-46
N.25	Houston	34-35

COACH

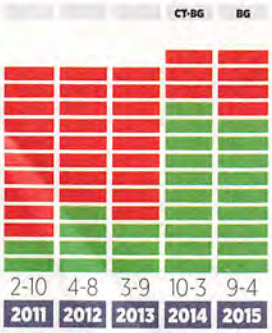
Mike Norvell
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chip Long (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chris Ball (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Auburn in the Birmingham Bowl, 31-10)
STADIUM: Liberty Bowl Memorial Stadium (59,308)
TICKETS: 888-867-UofM
SITE: Memphis
WEBSITE: gotigersgo.com
TWITTER: @MemphisFB

5-YEAR RECORD
28-34



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Riley Ferguson (6-4, 190, Jr.)
RB	Doroland Dorceus (5-10, 215, Jr.)
LT	Zach Collins (6-4, 290, Jr.)
LG	Chris Roberson (6-7, 330, Sr.)
C	Drew Kyser (6-5, 300, So.)
RG	Gabe Kuhn (6-4, 295, Jr.)
RT	Trevon Tate (6-4, 280, So.)
TE	Daniel Montiel (6-3, 240, Sr.)
WR	Anthony Miller (5-11, 190, Jr.)
WR	Phil Mayhue (6-3, 210, Jr.)
WR	Daniel Hurd (6-2, 220, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Christian Johnson (6-5, 255, Jr.)
DT	Donald Pennington (6-2, 295, Sr.)
DT	Ernest Suttles (6-5, 265, Jr.)
DE	Latarius Brady (6-2, 280, Sr.)
LB	Genard Avery (6-1, 255, Jr.)
LB	Jackson Dillon (6-6, 245, Sr.)
LB	Shareef White (6-1, 235, Jr.)
CB	Shaun Rupert (6-1, 195, Jr.)
CB	Chauncey Lanier (5-10, 185, Sr.)
S	Jonathan Cook (6-0, 198, Jr.)
S	Chris Morley (5-11, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jake Elliott (5-10, 165, Sr.)
P	Spencer Smith (6-1, 195, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Riley Ferguson,** QB ★★★
2 **Lio Lafaele,** OT ★★★
3 **John Tate,** DE ★★★

A late push powered by the hire of head coach Mike Norvell helped Memphis land former Tennessee linebacker commit Tim Hart, one-time Tennessee quarterback Riley Ferguson, former Alabama safety commit Joshua Perry and former SMU quarterback commit David Moore in a matter of weeks.

DORCEUS: CHARLIE RIEDEL / AP

3 NAVY
MIDSHIPMEN

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Fordham	
S.10	Connecticut	28-18
S.17	@TULANE	31-14
O.1	@AIR FORCE	33-11
O.8	Houston	31-52
O.15	@EAST CAROLINA	45-21
O.22	Memphis	45-20
O.28	@SOUTH FLORIDA	29-17
N.5	Notre Dame*	24-41
N.12	Tulsa	44-21
N.26	@SMU	55-14
D.10	Army**	21-17

*At Jacksonville, FL
**At Baltimore, MD

COACH

Ken Niumatalolo
Ninth year (68-37)
CAREER RECORD: 68-37

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Ivin Jasper (ninth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Dale Pehrson (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-2
(Beat Pittsburgh in the Military Bowl, 44-28)
STADIUM: Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium (34,000)
TICKETS: 800-US4-NAVY
SITE: Annapolis, Md.
WEBSITE: navysports.com
TWITTER: @NavyFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Tago Smith (5-10, 201, Sr.)
FB	Shawn White (6-1, 255, Sr.)
SB	Dishan Romine (5-11, 178, Sr.)
SB	Toneo Gulley (5-8, 196, Sr.)
LT	Andrew Wood (6-4, 300, So.)
LG	Adam West (6-3, 297, Sr.)
C	Maurice Morris (6-2, 327, Sr.)
RG	Evan Martin (6-3, 294, Jr.)
RT	Robert Lindsey (6-4, 274, Jr.)
WR	Jamir Tillman (6-4, 212, Sr.)
WR	Tyler Carmona (6-4, 222, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jarvis Polu (6-3, 280, So.)
NG	Patrick Forrestal (6-4, 305, Sr.)
DE	Amos Mason (6-1, 266, Sr.)
LB	Josiah Powell (6-3, 224, Sr.)
LB	Micah Thomas (6-1, 249, Jr.)
LB	Daniel Gonzales (6-2, 240, Sr.)
LB	Ted Colburn (6-3, 230, Sr.)
CB	Tyris Wooten (6-1, 180, Jr.)
CB	Elijah Merchant (5-10, 196, Jr.)
S	Daiquan Thomasson (6-0, 205, Sr.)
S	Sean Williams (6-1, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	D.J. Grant-Johnson (6-3, 216, Sr.)
P	Alex Barta (6-3, 213, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

So what will life be like without Keenan Reynolds?

Navy's former quarterback is college football's all-time touchdown leader. The playmaker finished fifth in the Heisman Trophy balloting and always will be revered in Annapolis.

Smith

Senior Tago Smith will look to fill the very big shoes. He has played in 18 career games, including a couple of starts in 2014.

Smith will engineer a triple-option attack that saw 16 different players register carries in 2015. This year's offense will feature slot backs Dishan Romine and Toneo Gulley. Romine gained 378 yards on only 36 runs last season (10.5 yards per carry) while Gulley averaged 15.8 yards per carry (12 carries for 189 yards).

Wide receiver Jamir Tillman returns as a receiving threat after making 29 catches for 597 yards and five touchdowns last season.

Navy won 11 games in 2015 and was helped by a defensive unit that was third best in the AAC. The Midshipmen will be anchored again by linebacker Daniel Gonzales, a senior who has already been named a co-captain alongside Gulley. Gonzales has 151 career tackles over the past two years, including four interceptions.

Linebacker Micah Thomas had 73 stops last year with 4.5 tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks.

The Midshipmen had a successful debut in their first conference season. After 134 years as an independent, Navy was the AAC West Division co-champions with Houston.

The middle part of the season will be Navy's biggest test. A seven-game stretch, which begins with Air Force, includes six contests against teams that advanced to bowl games last season.

SMITH: ERIC GAY / AP

4 TULSA
GOLDEN HURRICANE

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	San Jose State	
S.10	@OHIO STATE	
S.17	North Carolina A&T	
S.24	@FRESNO STATE	
O.7	SMU	40-31
O.15	@HOUSTON	24-38
O.22	Tulane	45-34
O.29	@MEMPHIS	42-66
N.5	East Carolina	17-30
N.12	@NAVY	21-44
N.19	@UCF	45-30
N.25	Cincinnati	38-49

COACH

Philip Montgomery
Second year (6-7)
CAREER RECORD: 6-7

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Philip Montgomery (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Bill Young (second year)
Brian Norwood (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Virginia Tech in the Independence Bowl, 55-52)
STADIUM: H.A. Chapman Stadium (30,000)
TICKETS: 918-631-GoTU
SITE: Tulsa, Okla.
WEBSITE: tulsahurricane.com
TWITTER: @TulsaFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Dane Evans (6-1, 210, Sr.)
RB	D'Angelo Brewer (5-9, 185, Jr.)
LT	Evan Plagg (6-3, 292, Jr.)
LG	Tyler Bowling (6-6, 325, So.)
C	Chandler Miller (6-3, 290, So.)
RG	Alex Pagonis (6-5, 320, Sr.)
RT	Blake Belcher (6-5, 304, Sr.)
TE	Chris Minter (6-3, 247, So.)
WR	Justin Hobbs (6-4, 207, So.)
WR	Keevan Lucas (5-10, 195, Sr.)
WR	Josh Atkinson (6-2, 208, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jeremy Smith (6-5, 260, Jr.)
DT	Jerry Uwaezuoke (6-3, 286, Sr.)
DT	Hayden Carman (6-4, 289, Sr.)
DE	Frankie Davis (6-2, 240, Jr.)
LB	Matt Linscott (6-1, 223, Sr.)
LB	Trent Martin (6-2, 232, Sr.)
LB	Craig Suits (6-0, 220, Jr.)
CB	Kerwin Thomas (5-10, 170, Jr.)
CB	Reggie Robinson II (6-1, 190, Fr.)
S	Jeremy Brady (5-10, 197, Sr.)
S	Jordan Mitchell (6-2, 187, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Redford Jones (5-10, 175, Jr.)
P	Dalton Parks (6-3, 209, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Just four years ago the thought of celebrating a 6-7 football season would have made most Tulsa football fans cringe.

But last season the Golden Hurricane finished one game under .500 and had reason to smile following the rookie campaign of head coach Philip Montgomery. Tulsa only won five games total in the two seasons following a 2012 Conference USA championship and Liberty Bowl crown.

Montgomery, a former Baylor offensive coordinator, helped turn things around immediately by injecting a new attitude and fresh start.

Quarterback Dane Evans quickly adapted to Montgomery's offense. With 8,332 passing yards, he is 2,604 yards away from surpassing Paul Smith as the school's all-time leader. Last season, he ranked first in the AAC for passing yards per game (333.2), which also ranked seventh nationally.

The senior will share the backfield with two experienced running backs (D'Angelo Brewer and Ramadi Warren). He'll have receivers like Josh Atkinson (76 catches, 1,071 yards), Keevan Lucas (101 catches, 1,219 yards in 2014) and Justin Hobbs (17.2 yards per reception) at his disposal.

Last year, to gain wins, Tulsa had to outscore people. The defense, which gave up 39.8 points and 536.6 yards per game, must better itself in 2016. Four of the top five tacklers return, including senior linebackers Matt Linscott (107 stops) and Trent Martin (104).

The Golden Hurricane were opportunistic last season with 10 interceptions and returned four of the picks for touchdowns. Safety Jeremy Brady and cornerback Kerwin Thomas will be the secondary's nucleus.

The nonconference schedule is manageable–outside of a road trip to Ohio State–and could provide a nice springboard into league play.

5 SMU MUSTANGS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@NORTH TEXAS	31-13
S.10	@BAYLOR	21-56
S.17	Liberty	
S.23	TCU	37-56
O.1	@TEMPLE	40-60
O.7	@TULSA	31-40
O.22	Houston	28-49
O.29	@TULANE	49-21
N.5	Memphis	0-63
N.12	@EAST CAROLINA	23-49
N.19	South Florida	14-38
N.26	Navy	14-55

SMU coach Chad Morris

COACH

Chad Morris
Second year (2-10)
CAREER RECORD: 2-10

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Joe Craddock (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Van Malone (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 2-10
STADIUM: Gerald J. Ford Stadium (32,000)
TICKETS: 214-768-4263
SITE: Dallas
WEBSITE: smumustangs.com
TWITTER: @SMU_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Matt Davis (6-0, 211, Sr.)
RB	Braeden West (5-10, 166, So.)
LT	Chad Pursley (6-4, 280, So.)
LG	Braylon Hyder (6-2, 327, Jr.)
C	Travis Fister (6-2, 264, Jr.)
RG	Evan Brown (6-3, 307, Jr.)
RT	Chauncey Briggs (6-6, 298, Sr.)
TE	Jeremiah Gaines (6-2, 255, Sr.)
WR	Courtland Sutton (6-4, 224, So.)
WR	Shelby Walker (6-0, 160, Jr.)
WR	Ryheem Malone (5-9, 181, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Justin Lawler (6-4, 257, Jr.)
DT	Deon Green (6-4, 293, Sr.)
DT	Mason Gentry (6-6, 305, Jr.)
DE	Jarvis Pruitt (6-3, 253, Sr.)
LB	Jackson Mitchell (6-0, 223, Sr.)
LB	Anthony Rhone (6-0, 235, Jr.)
LB	RC Cox (6-1, 217, Jr.)
CB	Jesse Montgomery (6-1, 180, Jr.)
CB	William Jeanlys (6-2, 188, So.)
S	Jordan Wyatt (6-0, 190, So.)
S	Darrion Richardson (6-0, 202, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Michael Armstrong (5-9, 177, So.)
P	Josh Williams (5-11, 177, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Shortly after his first season as the Mustangs' head coach was complete, Chad Morris was asked to reflect on the program.

Morris said taking over a team that finished 1-11 in 2014 was tough and, combined with a tough schedule that included seven ranked teams, proved to be a challenge. But Morris didn't waver on his positive attitude following a 2-10 campaign.

"I thought we stepped in the right direction this year and established our culture," Morris said last December. "We're putting together a program. I knew it was going to be a year of rebuild, a rebuilding process. I knew it is going to take some great recruiting and it's going to take some patience ...

"One year in at SMU, we have a lot of work to do, but we'll keep moving along."

Southern Methodist has, indeed, had a hard fall. In 2010, 2011 and 2012, the program advanced to bowl games. Since then, SMU is a combined 8-28.

The Mustangs' success is predicated on their offense, and SMU has a one-two punch in quarterback Matt Davis, a former Texas A&M player, and Freshman All-America wide receiver Courtland Sutton.

The SMU defense will be paced by end Justin Lawler, but it must vastly improve from last season when the Mustangs gave up 45.7 points per game, which rated 126th nationally.

The season will jump right at them in 2016. Three of their first five contests (Baylor, TCU, Temple) will be against teams that were ranked last season.

6 TULANE GREEN WAVE

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	@WAKE FOREST	
S.10	Southern	
S.17	Navy	14-31
S.24	Louisiana	
O.1	@MASSACHUSETTS*	
O.7	@UCF	45-31
O.14	Memphis	13-41
O.22	@TULSA	34-45
O.29	SMU	21-49
N.12	@HOUSTON	7-42
N.19	Temple	10-49
N.26	@CONNECTICUT	3-7

At Foxboro, MA

COACH

Willie Fritz
First year
Career record: 155-69

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Doug Ruse (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jack Curtis (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Yulman Stadium (30,000)
TICKETS: 504-861-WAVE
SITE: New Orleans
WEBSITE: tulanegreenwave.com
TWITTER: @GreenWaveFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Devin Powell (6-3, 241, Sr.)
FB	Lazedrick Thompson (6-0, 219, Sr.)
RB	Dontrell Hilliard (5-11, 195, Jr.)
LT	John Leglue (6-7, 298, So.)
LG	Leeward Brown (6-3, 344, So.)
C	Junior Diaz (6-3, 292, So.)
RG	Chris Taylor (6-3, 320, Sr.)
RT	Todd Jacquet (6-5, 292, Sr.)
TE	Charles Jones (6-4, 234, Jr.)
WR	Andrew Hicks (6-3, 198, So.)
WR	Rickey Preston (6-1, 174, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Daren Williams (6-3, 243, Jr.)
DT	Tanzel Smart (6-1, 304, Sr.)
DT	Sean Wilson (6-3, 271, Jr.)
DE	Ade Aruna (6-5, 241, Jr.)
LB	Eric Thomas (5-11, 243, Sr.)
LB	Nico Marley (5-10, 208, Sr.)
LB	Jarrod Franklin (6-1, 208, Jr.)
CB	Parry Nickerson (6-0, 182, Jr.)
CB	Richard Allen (5-10, 178, Sr.)
S	Roderic Teamer (5-11, 191, So.)
S	Tristan Cooper (6-0, 181, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andrew DiRocco (6-1, 173, Jr.)
P	Zachary Block (6-4, 182, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Tulane has only had one winning season since the 2003 campaign. It has only finished with more than four victories once in the past 11 years.

And now the Green Wave program is on its fourth coach during that span in an effort to turn things around.

Willie Fritz, the former Georgia Southern head coach, takes over after Curtis Johnson's four-year run in New Orleans. Fritz's success as a program-builder (Georgia Southern, Sam Houston State, Central Missouri) brings hope to a Tulane program that's been void of a conference championship since 1998.

One thing is certain with the Green Wave this season: The quarterback will run the football and engineer an option-based attack. Fritz has guided some of the nation's top rushing attacks, which has been vital to the coach's success.

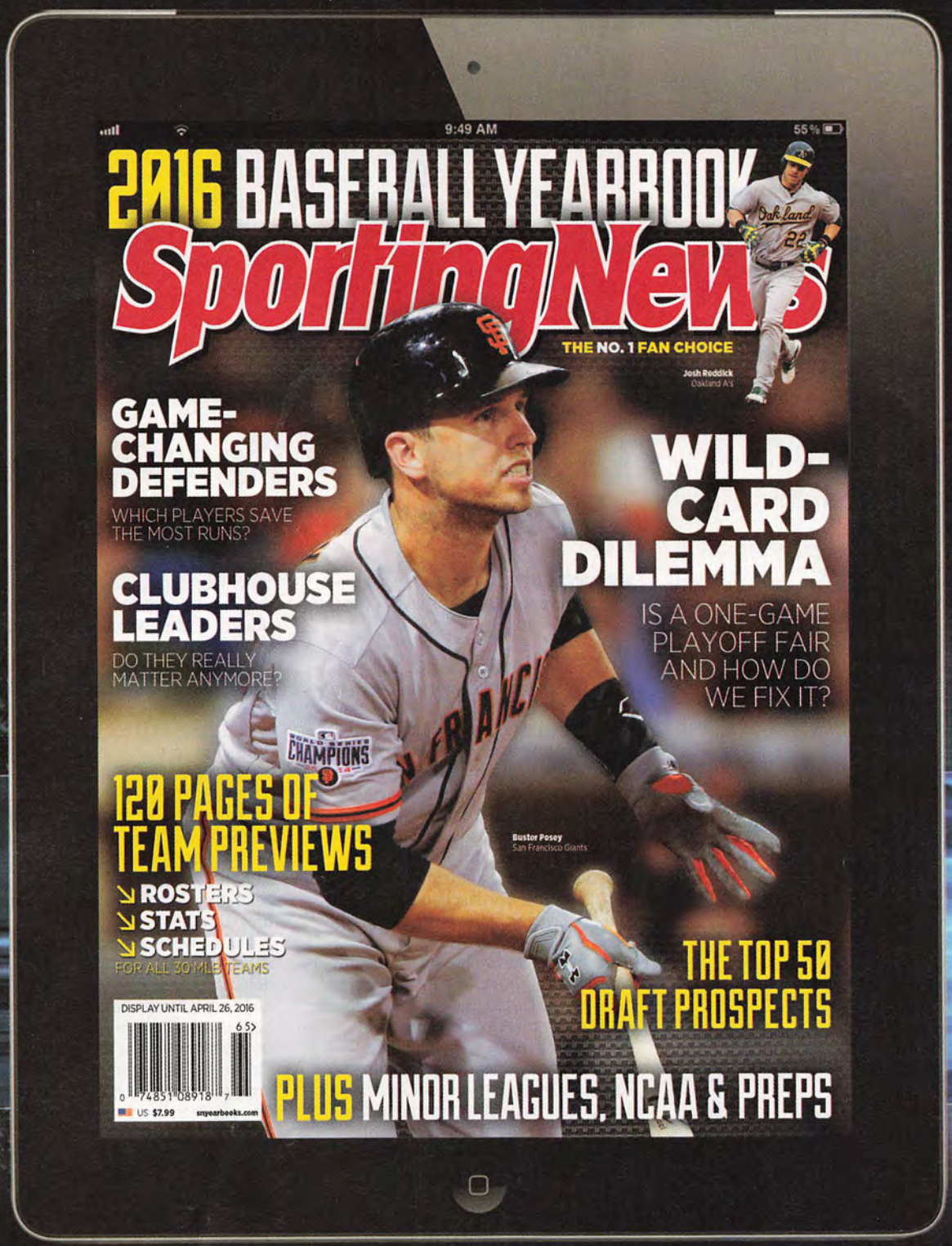
But who will be the offensive leader of a team that ranked 119th in offense last year? The experienced player is Devin Powell (last year's backup quarterback), but watch for incoming freshmen Darius Bradwell and Glen Cuiellette.

Running back Dontrell Hilliard ran for 646 yards last season. In Fritz's offense, which averaged 363 rushing yards per game last season at Georgia Southern, he should get more touches and yards. Sherman Badie had a breakout 2014, but saw limited action last fall. He'll challenge for time in the backfield along with redshirt seniors Lazedrick Thompson and Josh Rounds.

The Tulane defense will be the team's strength. Two All-AAC players–linebacker Nico Marley and defensive tackle Tanzel Smart–will anchor the unit. Linebacker Jarrod Franklin is also an all-conference candidate.

A September with only one road game (Wake Forest) and three straight home games (Southern, Navy, Louisiana) will be an early barometer for the season.

MORRIS: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP



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Florida State's Jimbo Fisher (left) and Clemson's Dabo Swinney are the ACC coaching heavyweights these days. They'll battle again for the Atlantic Division title.

PROJECTED FINISH

ATLANTIC DIVISION

1. **Clemson** — BOWL PROJECTION: CFP Semifinals (Fiesta Bowl)
2. **Florida State** — BOWL PROJECTION: Orange Bowl
3. **Louisville** — BOWL PROJECTION: Sun Bowl
4. **N.C. State** — BOWL PROJECTION: Quick Lane Bowl
5. **Boston College** — BOWL PROJECTION: Military Bowl
6. **Wake Forest**
7. **Syracuse**

COASTAL DIVISION

1. **North Carolina** — BOWL PROJECTION: Russell Athletic Bowl
2. **Miami** — BOWL PROJECTION: Music City Bowl
3. **Virginia Tech** — BOWL PROJECTION: Belk Bowl
4. **Georgia Tech** — BOWL PROJECTION: Pinstripe Bowl
5. **Pittsburgh** — BOWL PROJECTION: Independence Bowl
6. **Duke** — BOWL PROJECTION: St. Petersburg Bowl
7. **Virginia**

Elijah Hood, RB, North Carolina

Late-October Tigers-'Noles showdown will be telling

BY PATRICK STEVENS
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

Technically, the ACC will crown its champion Dec. 3 in Charlotte with its league title game. Realistically, there will be a harbinger of who will claim that honor more than a month earlier.

The winner of the annual Clemson-Florida State game has gone on to claim the Atlantic Division and conference title in five consecutive years. In 2013, it launched Florida State into the last BCS title game. The last two seasons, the schools have taken turns earning playoff bids.

It would come as little surprise if this year's Oct. 29 showdown in Tallahassee ultimately presages the league champion again. Clemson brings back many of the major offensive cogs, including quarterback Deshaun Watson, tailback Wayne Gallman and wideout Artavis Scott, from last year's juggernaut. And Florida State returns nearly its entire offense outside of one-year stopgap Everett Golson at quarterback.

"As go Clemson and Florida State, so goes the ACC." It isn't exactly the catchiest slogan, and it certainly isn't what a dozen other programs have in mind. But for now, it's better than muddling through season after season without the faintest hope of a national title contender, which was the state of affairs for nearly a decade.

The conference suffers a bit in perception without strong Coastal Division counters to the heavyweights, but an intriguing final three months of 2015 suggests that could soon change.

North Carolina, long deemed a sleeping giant that seemed perfectly content to dozing through the autumn on the way to basketball season, went 11-3 last fall to earn its first trip to the ACC title game. The Tar Heels bring back star tailback Elijah Hood from their breakthrough team.

Miami, which has yet to deliver as a national power since joining the ACC, doled out big money to hire alum Mark Richt after Georgia jettisoned its longtime head coach. Virginia Tech has new energy with the hire of Justin Fuente. Pittsburgh showed improvement under first-year coach Pat Narduzzi. And Georgia Tech is only a year removed from an 11-3 season of its own.

There's promise in more precincts of the Coastal than ever before, and that bodes well for the league's strength. Until those programs can further blossom, though, the road to an ACC title will probably still roll through Clemson and Florida State.

FISHER, SWINNEY: RICHARD SHIRO / AP ; HOOD: ROB BROWN / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Clemson's back:** Sure, there was a significant exodus on the defensive side, but the Tigers faced the same problem last year and made the national title game. This team has top-10 talent.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Ryan Bartow, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Florida State	25	1	17	7	295.47
2	Clemson	20	1	12	7	270.78
3	Miami	19	0	10	9	234.56
4	Pittsburgh	24	0	3	21	209.06
5	Duke	21	0	2	19	204.78
6	North Carolina	26	0	1	24	202.72
7	Louisville	25	0	2	21	195.34
8	Virginia Tech	21	0	1	20	190.16
9	N.C. State	23	0	0	21	178.77
10	Georgia Tech	18	0	0	14	167.26
11	Wake Forest	22	0	0	19	167.26
12	Virginia	25	0	0	23	163.79
13	Syracuse	20	0	0	18	159.95
14	Boston College	19	0	0	16	147.97

ALL-ACC

OFFENSE

- QB **Deshaun Watson,** Jr., Clemson
- RB **Dalvin Cook,** Jr., Florida State
- RB **Elijah Hood,** Jr., North Carolina
- OL **Roderick Johnson,** Jr., Florida State
- OL **Caleb Peterson,** Sr., North Carolina
- OL **Jay Guillermo,** Sr., Clemson
- OL **Dorian Johnson,** Sr., Pittsburgh
- OL **Jon Heck,** Sr., North Carolina
- TE **Jaylen Samuels,** Jr., N.C. State
- WR **Travis Rudolph,** Jr., Florida State
- WR **Isaiah Ford,** Jr., Virginia Tech

DEFENSE

- DL **DeMarcus Walker,** Sr., Florida State
- DL **Carlos Watkins,** Sr., Clemson
- DL **DeAngelo Brown,** Sr., Louisville
- DL **Nazair Jones,** Jr., North Carolina
- LB **Micah Kiser,** Jr., Virginia
- LB **Keith Kelsey,** Sr., Louisville
- LB **Ben Boulware,** Sr., Clemson
- DB **Jordan Whitehead,** So., Pittsburgh
- DB **Quin Blanding,** Jr., Virginia
- DB **Derwin James,** So., Florida State
- DB **M.J. Stewart,** Jr., North Carolina

SPECIALISTS

- K **Greg Huegel,** So., Clemson
- P **Nicholas Conte,** Sr., Virginia

WAYNE ROBERTS/AP

↗ NEWSMAKER

One of the two of last year's three Heisman Trophy finalists still in school, Clemson QB **Deshaun Watson** is the returning ACC Player of the Year and the top reason to believe Clemson has another run at a national title in it this fall. It's probably Watson's last go-round in college, so Tiger fans should savor this season as much as possible.

↘ OVERRATED

MIAMI

▸ The Hurricanes made a blockbuster hire in Mark Richt, but they've also been oversold for the last decade. It's best to believe it when you see it from The U.

↘ UNDERRATED

PITTSBURGH

▸ The Panthers return eight starters on both sides from a team that won eight games, and Pat Narduzzi showed some fine coaching chops in his first season. Pittsburgh could contend again in the Coastal.

2 Florida State regroups: The 'Noles weren't quite right last year, especially on offense, and yet they still went 10-3 and earned a New Year's Six invite. Look for a step forward in Tallahassee.

3 Coastal upgrades: Miami hired Mark Richt. Virginia Tech lured Justin Fuente to replace Frank Beamer. Virginia snagged Bronco Mendenhall. The stakes in the Coastal Division went up in a hurry.

RATING THE ACC

↘ FASTEST RECEIVER
Kermit Whitfield, Florida State
The former high school track star puts his speed to excellent use not only as a receiver but also as a kickoff returner.

↘ BEST HANDS
Artavis Scott, WR, Clemson
He's still the top target for QB Deshaun Watson and as reliable a receiver as there is in the conference.

↘ BEST PASSING QB
Deshaun Watson, Clemson
He threw for more than 4,000 yards as a sophomore and already looks like a high-end prospect for the NFL Draft.

↘ BEST RUNNING QB
Lamar Jackson, Louisville
Still coming along as a passer, but the soph's electric finish to 2015 demonstrated he's one of the league's best rushers.

↘ MOST ELUSIVE RB
Dalvin Cook, Florida State
Opponents knew the Seminoles' passing game was a shell of its former self and still couldn't contain Cook last season.

↘ BEST INSTINCTS
Derwin James, S, Florida State
The latest multifaceted defensive back the Seminoles have unleashed during coach Jimbo Fisher's tenure.

↘ BEST ATHLETE
Dalvin Cook, RB, Florida State
His two-year mark of 6.76 yards per carry ranks eighth in ACC history among players with 1,000 or more career rushing yards.

↘ BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Isaiah Ford, WR, Virginia Tech
Of his 21 fourth-quarter receptions last season, 16 went for first downs.

↘ TOP NFL PROSPECT
Deshaun Watson, QB, Clemson
It's not difficult to envision a pro team investing a top-10 pick in the Tigers' star in another year.

↘ TOP FRESHMAN
Dexter Lawrence, DT, Clemson
The mammoth newcomer (6-5, 340 pounds) should factor into the Tigers' line rotation after enrolling early.

↘ TOP TRANSFER
Gerald Willis, DL, Miami
Played eight games in 2014 as a Florida frosh before opting to join the Hurricanes; has three years of eligibility left.

↘ HARDEST HITTER
Quin Blanding, S, Virginia
Has more than lived up to the considerable expectations that accompanied him to Charlottesville two years ago.

↘ BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Mack Hollins, WR, North Carolina
The former walk-on has become one of the best in the conference at stretching the field.

↘ BEST INTERVIEW
James Conner, RB, Pittsburgh
Try not to be impressed with his public response to Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosis: "I realized that fear is a choice. I choose to not fear cancer. I choose to fight it and I will win."

↘ BEST COACH
Dabo Swinney, Clemson
Has the Tigers cooking on the field and in recruiting.

↘ COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Brent Venables, Clemson
It's only a matter of time before the Tigers' defensive maestro gets a head-coaching gig of his own.

↘ LOUDEST STADIUM
Lane Stadium, Virginia Tech
Especially for a night game, Blacksburg provides a rowdy environment.

↘ TOP SCHOLAR
A.J. Wolf, DT, Duke
Senior was first-team Academic All-American last year and carries a 3.69 GPA while majoring in Public Policy Studies.

CLEMSON
TIGERS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2

SportingNews 2016 NATIONAL RANK

Deshaun Watson

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@AUBURN	
S.10	Troy	
S.17	South Carolina State	
S.22	@GEORGIA TECH	43-24
O.1	Louisville	20-17
O.7	@BOSTON COLLEGE	34-17
O.15	N.C. State	56-41
O.29	@FLORIDA STATE	23-13
N.5	Syracuse	37-27
N.12	Pittsburgh	
N.19	@WAKE FOREST	33-13
N.26	South Carolina	37-32

COACH

Dabo Swinney
Ninth year (75-27)
CAREER RECORD: 75-27
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Tony Elliott (second year)
Jeff Scott (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Brent Venables (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 14-1
(Lost to Alabama in the College Football Playoff National Championship Game, 45-40)
STADIUM: Memorial Stadium (81,500)
TICKETS: 1-800-CLEMSON
SITE: Clemson, S.C.
WEBSITE: clemsontigers.com
TWITTER: @ClemsonFB

Clemson reached the national title game last season while recording its fifth consecutive year of at least 10 victories. It produced a Heisman Trophy finalist who happens to be back for what could easily be his final season in college.

It has reached the point under coach Dabo Swinney that the Tigers' championship window might not close very often. But it can be open a bit wider than other years, and there's reason to think Clemson could find itself back in a similar situation as a year ago.

"We are proud of what we accomplished last year as the No. 2 team in the final rankings," Swinney told reporters at spring practice. "Now our goal is to get to No. 1."

The presence of quarterback Deshaun Watson certainly fuels those hopes. The junior was plenty good enough in the first month of the season while coming off ACL surgery, then carried the Tigers to a dominant run through ACC play. Watson became the first player in FBS history to roll up 4,000 yards passing and 1,000 yards rushing in a single season.

He was the ACC Player of the Year last fall and will be the favorite to take home those honors again this season. But it's not as if he's a one-man band for the Clemson offense, which rolled along quite nicely under first-year co-coordinators Tony Elliott and Jeff Scott in 2015.

Wayne Gallman rumbled for a school-record 1,527 yards and 13 touchdowns last season and will again serve as Clemson's primary rusher. Artavis Scott is back after hauling in 93 receptions as a sophomore, and the Tigers will also have Mike Williams, a deep threat who missed nearly all of last season with a neck injury suffered in the first quarter of the season opener.

Toss in tight end Jordan Leggett and sophomores Deon Cain and Ray-Ray McCloud, and Watson has no shortage of targets a year after finishing third in the Heisman balloting. He'll also have plenty of established protection up front as center Jay Guillermo (second-team All-ACC), guard

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB Deshaun Watson

We were all witnesses: Deshaun Watson is here to stay. A dual-threat quarterback who can throw as well as he can run, Watson showed off his entire repertoire to NFL scouts in 2015. En route to the national championship game against Alabama, Watson tossed 35 touchdowns with 4,104 yards passing (866 yards more than the next ACC quarterback) and 1,105 yards rushing (fifth best in the conference). Watson is so multitalented it isn't a stretch to say he could end 2016 with an NCAA title and Heisman Trophy in addition to being the No. 1 pick in next April's NFL Draft. How's that for a trifecta?

WATSON: BOB LEVERONE / AP

Tyrone Crowder (third-team All-ACC) and tackle Mitch Hyatt (third-team All-ACC) return.

Under normal conditions, there would be legitimate concern about the Tigers' defense. After all, seven starters–including College Football Playoff star Kevin Dodd, end Shaq Lawson and cornerback Mackensie Alexander–earned invitations to the pre-draft NFL Combine. Yet Clemson brought back only three starters last season and still managed to allow the 10th-fewest yards per game in the country.

Basically, Swinney has Clemson at the point where it effectively reloads every season. Coordinator Brent Venables' defense was more reliant on its top 11 than usual, and there could be an adjustment period as the Tigers sort out several new significant contributors. But only one bowl team from last season awaits in September (7-6 Auburn), so there should be time to sort things out.

Some stalwarts remain, including first team All-ACC defensive lineman Carlos Watkins. Ben Boulware should anchor the linebacking corps, while cornerback Cordrea Tankersley (who had a team-best five interceptions last year) is the most established player in the secondary.

Among the promising younger players are sophomore Christian Wilkins, who made 33 tackles (4.5 for loss) last season at tackle. He could see time at end this fall. Kendall Joseph enjoyed a solid spring and should play a larger role at linebacker this season.

Not only does the early schedule favor the Tigers, but they also get Louisville, Pittsburgh and rebuilding South Carolina at home over the final two months of the season. It's quite possible (and perhaps likely) the Clemson-Florida State game on Oct. 29 in Tallahassee ultimately determines the ACC's Atlantic Division and who (if anyone) in the league can reach the CFP.

It's quite the change from the last two years, when Clemson faced a frontloaded schedule and had to be at its best in the season's opening weeks. These Tigers have time to acclimate, but they will also face considerable scrutiny from the start after last year's run.

Few teams are better prepared to deal with it. Swinney's program has won 37 in a row against unranked foes, and Watson could be the best player in the country this year. Whether it adds up to another playoff berth remains to be seen, but there's no reason for the Tigers not to be in the mix again this fall.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES

1 **Dexter Lawrence,** DT ★★★★★
2 **Tavien Feaster,** RB ★★★★
3 **Tre Lamar,** LB ★★★★

The Tigers benefit from geography when it comes to defensive-line recruiting in the Carolinas, where for over two decades more NFL defensive linemen have arguably come from than anywhere else per capita. They signed the top-rated defensive tackle in North Carolina (Dexter Lawrence) and South Carolina (Nyles Pinckney). Clemson also landed the nation's No. 1 running back in Tavien Feaster to go with two four-star linebackers in Shaq Smith and Tre Lamar. Coach Dabo Swinney added a pair of four-star U.S. Army All-Americans with defensive end Xavier Kelly and guard John Simpson, and kept the ball rolling at wide receiver with three four-star signees: Diondre Overton, Cornell Powell and T.J. Chase.

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Deshaun Watson

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
15	156.3	333-491-13	67.8	4104	35	273.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Wayne Gallman	14	283	1527	5.4	13	109.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Artavis Scott	15	93	901	9.7	6	60.1

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Ben Boulware	15	44	38	82

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Ben Boulware	15	3.5	25
Carlos Watkins	15	3.5	18

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Cordrea Tankersley	5	50	10.0	1

TEAM TRADITION

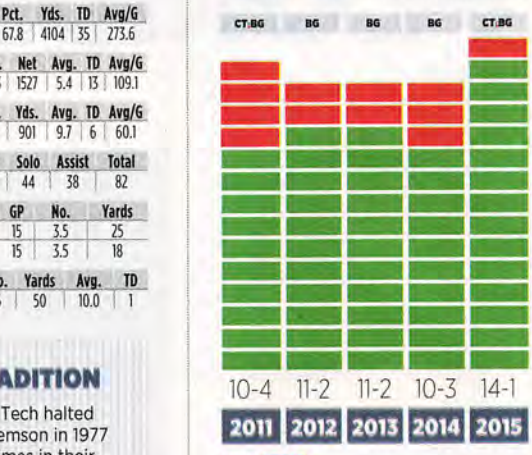
When Georgia Tech halted the series with Clemson in 1977 after playing 47 times in their history, Tiger fans wanted to show their economic impact. So they gathered up as many $2 bills as possible, stamped them with orange tiger paws and spent them in Atlanta. Clemson fans carry on the tradition at away games, championship games and bowl games. Local banks will stock up on the bills prior to Clemson bowl games.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	CLEM	OPP
SCORING	577	325
Points Per Game	38.5	21.7
FIRST DOWNS	393	225
Rushing	166	93
Passing	197	111
Penalty	30	21
RUSHING YARDAGE	3345	1879
Yards gained rushing	3627	2417
Yards lost rushing	282	538
Rushing Attempts	679	531
Average Per Rush	4.9	3.5
Average Per Game	223.0	125.3
TDs Rushing	34	18
PASSING YARDAGE	4373	2816
Comp-Att-Int	356-528-15	212-437-16
Average Per Pass	8.3	6.4
Average Per Catch	12.3	13.3
Average Per Game	291.5	187.7
TDs Passing	35	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	7718	4695
Total Plays	1207	968
Average Per Play	6.4	4.9
Average Per Game	514.5	313.0
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	40-865	71-1764
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	27-63	16-97
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	16-137	15-103
KICK RETURN AVG.	21-6	24.8
PUNT RETURN AVG.	2.3	6.1
INT RETURN AVG.	8.6	6.9
FUMBLES-LOST	26-12	21-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	84-694	89-812
Average Per Game	46.3	54.1
PUNTS-YARDS	69-2699	111-4617
Average Per Punt	39.1	41.6
Net punt average	37.4	40.7
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:56	28:04
3RD-DOWN CONV.	109/230	61/220
3rd-Down Pct.	47%	28%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/14	9/21
4th-Down Pct.	57%	43%
SACKS BY-YARDS	48-322	18-99
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	71	41
FG-ATTEMPTS	28-33	14-19
ATTENDANCE	572258	276352
Games/Avg Per Game	7/81751	5/55270
Neutral Site Games		3/72631

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
CLEMSON	165	172	134	106	0	577
Opponent	70	67	65	123	0	325

5-YEAR RECORD 56-12



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Deshaun Watson** (6-2, 210, Jr.)
	Kelly Bryant (6-3, 215, So.)
RB	**Wayne Gallman** (6-1, 215, Jr.)
	Adam Choice (5-9, 215, So.)
LT	**Mitch Hyatt** (6-5, 295, So.)
	Tremayne Anchrum (6-3, 290, Fr.)
LG	**Taylor Hearn** (6-5, 330, So.)
	Justin Falcinelli (6-3, 305, So.)
C	**Jay Guillermo** (6-3, 325, Sr.)
	Zach Giella (6-5, 295, Fr.)
RG	**Tyrone Crowder** (6-2, 330, Jr.)
	Maverick Morris (6-5, 300, Jr.)
RT	**Jake Fruhmorgen** (6-6, 280, So.)
	Sean Pollard (6-5, 295, Fr.)
TE	**Jordan Leggett** (6-5, 255, Sr.)
	Milan Richard (6-2, 250, So.)
WR	**Artavis Scott** (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	Ray-Ray McCloud (5-10, 180, So.)
WR	**Mike Williams** (6-4, 220, Jr.)
	Trevion Thompson (6-2, 200, So.)
WR	**Hunter Renfrow** (5-10, 175, So.)
	Deon Cain (6-2, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Christian Wilkins** (6-4, 315, So.)
	Clelin Ferrell (6-5, 255, Fr.)
DT	**Carlos Watkins** (6-3, 300, Sr.)
	Albert Huggins (6-4, 295, So.)
DT	**Scott Pagano** (6-3, 295, Jr.)
	Dexter Lawrence (6-5, 340, Fr.)
DE	**Austin Bryant** (6-4, 265, So.)
	Richard Yeargin (6-3, 255, So.)
LB	**Dorian O'Daniel** (6-1, 215, Jr.)
	Jalen Williams (5-9, 225, So.)
LB	**Kendall Joseph** (6-0, 230, So.)
	Tre Lamar (6-4, 240, Fr.)
LB	**Ben Boulware** (5-11, 240, Sr.)
	Shaq Smith (6-3, 240, Fr.)
CB	**Cordrea Tankersley** (6-1, 195, Sr.)
	Ryan Carter (5-9, 175, Jr.)
CB	**Marcus Edmond** (6-0, 170, Jr.)
	Mark Fields (5-10, 195, So.)
S	**Van Smith** (6-0, 190, So.)
	Korrin Wiggins (6-0, 200, Jr.)
S	**Jadar Johnson** (6-1, 205, Sr.)
	Tanner Muse (6-2, 230, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Greg Huegel** (5-11, 185, So.)
P	**Andy Teasdall** (5-11, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

FLORIDA STATE
SEMINOLES

6
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

2
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Dalvin Cook

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.5	Ole Miss*	
S.10	Charleston Southern	
S.17	@LOUISVILLE	41-21
S.24	@SOUTH FLORIDA	34-14
O.1	North Carolina	
O.8	@MIAMI (FLA.)	29-24
O.15	Wake Forest	24-16
O.29	Clemson	13-23
N.5	@N.C. STATE	34-17
N.11	Boston College	14-0
N.19	@SYRACUSE	45-21
N.26	Florida	27-2

At Orlando, FL

COACH

Jimbo Fisher
Seventh year (68-14)
CAREER RECORD: 68-14

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Lawrence Dawsey (third year)
Randy Sanders (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Charles Kelly (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Houston in the Chick-fil-a Peach Bowl, 38-24)
STADIUM: Doak Campbell Stadium (82,300)
TICKETS: 888-378-6653
SITE: Tallahassee, Fla.
WEBSITE: seminoles.com
TWITTER: @FSU_Football

One easy way to measure Jimbo Fisher's success in six seasons as Florida State's football coach is the three ACC titles and one national championship the Seminoles have collected during that span.

A more subtle though still significant way to do so? Acknowledging last year's 10-3 mark now constitutes a "down year" in Tallahassee.

That's not to say Florida State was a massive disappointment, especially considering it needed to replace former Heisman Trophy winner Jameis Winston and much of its offensive line. It's just that three setbacks matched the total from the previous three years combined, and the Seminoles have re-established the standard of cranking out top-five teams annually like in the Bobby Bowden Era's halcyon years.

For many reasons, last season could be a blip in the Fisher-led juggernaut, and the Seminoles–national champions in 2013, playoff participants in 2014–have every reason to believe they can re-emerge as a national title contender this fall so long as they find a quarterback.

That might be senior Sean Maguire, who split time last year with graduate student Everett Golson and spent the spring rehabbing from ankle surgery. Or it could be redshirt sophomore J.J. Cosentino, redshirt freshman Deondre Francois or true freshman Malik Henry.

Whoever ultimately wins the job probably won't be asked to win games on his own in the way Winston did during his two years as the Seminoles' starter. Much of that stems from the presence of tailback Dalvin Cook, who shrugged off a preseason suspension last year to run for a school-record 1,691 yards. He pulverized defenses for 7.4 yards per rush and will again be the centerpiece of the Florida State offense.

The Seminoles were spotty on offense last year beyond Cook, and some of that tied into a massive personnel overhaul. That won't be a concern this year since at least a part-time

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

RB Dalvin Cook

The explosive Cook absolutely demolished the competition in 2015, rushing for 1,691 yards, which was 164 yards more than the second-leading ACC rusher. Cook scored 20 touchdowns, good for best in the conference, including two three-score outings against South Florida and rival Miami. Coming back as a junior, Cook has the opportunity with another great season to raise his draft stock and compete with SEC counterpart Leonard Fournette as the top running back available in next year's NFL Draft.

COOK: STEVE CANNON / AP

starter returns at every position.

That means the Seminoles have an offensive line with the benefit of spending a good chunk of one season together. In addition, receivers Travis Rudolph, Jesus Wilson and Kermit Whitfield–all of whom had at least 57 receptions in 2015–can provide stability for the eventual starting quarterback.

But considering this is a Fisher-led Florida State team, the true strength lies with a defense that continually reloads with future pros. This is the rare year when the Seminoles bring back more than half of their defensive starters, although cornerback Jalen Ramsey and linebacker Terrance Smith leave considerable holes at their respective positions.

While FSU must work new starters into the linebacking corps, it has some established players both up front and on the back end of the defense. Senior end DeMarcus Walker, who led the Seminoles in sacks (10.5) and tackles for loss (15.5) last season, will anchor a stout defensive line that helped hold foes to 145.3 rushing yards per game in 2015. Derrick Nnadi and Josh Sweat are also proven entities on the line.

Meanwhile, safety Derwin James is well on his way to becoming the next great Florida State defensive back. The sophomore turned in a sensational debut season, piling up 91 tackles (9.5 for loss), and should be one of the ACC's top defensive players this fall. Senior cornerback Marquez White started all 13 games last season and will be leaned upon heavily as well.

The Seminoles must replace standout kicker Roberto Aguayo, who turned pro after his junior season. A major candidate to replace him is his brother Ricky, who got a head start on winning the job in the spring as an early enrollee.

Enough is in place for Florida State to make a run at its fourth ACC title in five years, so long as it can knock off Clemson on Oct. 29. National title contention isn't out of the question, either, especially since many of the Seminoles' most high-profile opponents–North Carolina, Clemson and Florida–must venture to Doak Campbell Stadium.

Florida State is one of the few programs with the ability to crank out 10 or 11 wins without elite quarterback play. If the Seminoles can get something close to it–and they'll find out soon enough whether they'll enjoy it with September dates against Ole Miss and Louisville–Fisher could easily add to the program's already well-stocked trophy case.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Seminoles always sign the No. 1 class in the ACC. It's an annual right. The same thing happened, thanks in part to a strong finish on National Signing Day, in the 2016 cycle. Coach Jimbo Fisher loaded up in the trenches. Landing offensive tackles Landon Dickerson and Jauan Williams was a powerful pull. Add them to Baveon Johnson and Josh Ball and that's four prep All-Americans up front. The five-man haul on the defensive line that included five-star Brian Burns was one of the nation's best. Florida State also dipped into North Carolina to sign two four-star linebackers in Josh Brown and Keion Joyner. The 'Noles added a four-star quarterback, Malik Henry, and four-star tight end Nasir Upshur as well.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Levonta Taylor,** CB ★★★★★
2. **Landon Dickerson,** OT ★★★★
3. **Baveon Johnson,** C ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Sean Maguire

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
8	139.7	112-189-6	59.3	1520	11	190.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Dalvin Cook	12	229	1691	7.4	19	140.9

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Travis Rudolph	13	59	916	15.5	7	70.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Derwin James	13	52	39	91

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
DeMarcus Walker	13	10.5	58

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Josh Sweat	1	6	6.0	0
DeMarcus Walker	1	0	0.0	0
Marquez White	1	0	0.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

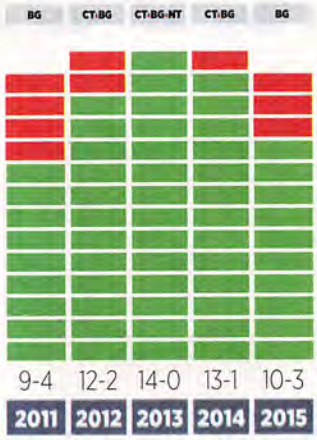
The Sod Cemetery, which is located right outside the Seminoles' practice field, is rich in tradition and commemorates some of the Seminoles' greatest triumphs. As underdogs in a 1962 road game at Georgia, the 'Noles pulled off the upset, 18-0, at Sanford Stadium. Captain Gene McDowell brought a piece of sod back, and coach Bill Peterson had it buried as a symbol of victory. In all, there are 98 sod games, each with its own monument.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	FSU	OPP
SCORING	412	227
Points Per Game	31.7	17.5
FIRST DOWNS	268	246
Rushing	107	107
Passing	141	122
Penalty	20	17
RUSHING YARDAGE	2187	1889
Yards gained rushing	2548	2171
Yards lost rushing	361	282
Rushing Attempts	425	493
Average Per Rush	5.1	3.8
Average Per Game	168.2	145.3
TDs Rushing	27	10
PASSING YARDAGE	3325	2491
Comp-Att-Int	264-419-9	252-443-8
Average Per Pass	7.9	1
Average Per Catch	12.6	9.9
Average Per Game	255.8	191.6
TDs Passing	22	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	5512	4380
Total Plays	844	936
Average Per Play	6.5	4.7
Average Per Game	424.0	336.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	25-624	33-557
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	34-127	21-197
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	8-104	9-28
KICK RETURN AVG.	25.0	16.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	3.7	9.4
INT RETURN AVG.	13.0	3.1
FUMBLES-LOST	16-6	16-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	89-702	74-631
Average Per Game	54.0	48.5
PUNTS-YARDS	62-2793	85-3586
Average Per Punt	45.0	42.2
Net punt average	40.6	39.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:25	30:35
3RD-DOWN CONV.	61/160	82/209
3rd-Down Pct.	38%	39%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	4/9	9/19
4th-Down Pct.	44%	47%
SACKS BY-YARDS	32-189	26-222
MISC. YARDS	10	78
TDS SCORED	50	26
FG-ATTEMPTS	21-26	15-17
ATTENDANCE	512534	296714
Games/Avg Per Game	7/73219	5/59343
Neutral Site Games		1/71007

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
FLORIDA STATE	93	90	113	116	0	412
Opponent	53	65	24	85	0	227

5-YEAR RECORD 58-10



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Deondre Francois** (6-1, 214, Fr.)
	Sean Maguire (6-3, 223, Sr.)
FB	**Freddie Stevenson** (6-1, 243, Sr.)
	Johnathan Vickers (6-1, 227, Jr.)
RB	**Dalvin Cook** (5-11, 206, Jr.)
	Jacques Patrick (6-2, 233, So.)
LT	**Roderick Johnson** (6-7, 307, Jr.)
	Brock Ruble (6-8, 293, So.)
LG	**Kareem Are** (6-6, 334, Sr.)
	Corey Martinez (6-4, 297, So.)
C	**Alec Eberle** (6-4, 287, So.)
	Ryan Hoefeld (6-2, 305, Jr.)
RG	**Wilson Bell** (6-5, 313, Jr.)
	David Robbins (6-4, 326, Fr.)
RT	**Derrick Kelly** (6-5, 321, So.)
	Rick Leonard (6-7, 287, Jr.)
TE	**Ryan Izzo** (6-5, 243, So.)
	Mavin Saunders (6-5, 253, So.)
WR	**Jesus Wilson** (5-10, 186, Sr.)
	Auden Tate (6-5, 218, So.)
WR	**Travis Rudolph** (6-1, 189, Jr.)
	Kermit Whitfield (5-8, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**DeMarcus Walker** (6-3, 273, Sr.)
	Adam Torres (6-4, 274, So.)
DT	**Demarcus Christmas** (6-4, 290, So.)
	Walvenski Aimé (6-4, 289, Fr.)
NG	**Derrick Nnadi** (6-1, 303, Jr.)
	Fredrick Jones (6-2, 311, So.)
DE	**Josh Sweat** (6-5, 236, So.)
	Jacob Pugh (6-4, 232, Jr.)
LB	**Ro'Derrick Hoskins** (6-2, 245, Jr.)
	Josh Brown (6-2, 217, Fr.)
LB	**Matthew Thomas** (6-3, 227, Jr.)
	Sh'Mar Kilby-Lane (6-1, 223, So.)
CB	**Marquez White** (6-0, 181, Sr.)
	Malique Jackson (6-0, 163, Jr.)
CB	**Tarvarus McFadden** (6-2, 201, So.)
	Marcus Lewis (6-1, 196, So.)
S	**Derwin James** (6-3, 213, So.)
	A.J. Westbrook (6-0, 182, So.)
S	**Nate Andrews** (6-0, 210, Sr.)
	Trey Marshall (6-0, 209, Jr.)
NB	**Trey Marshall** (6-0, 209, Jr.)
	Levonta Taylor (5-10, 175, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Ricky Aguayo** (6-1, 198, Fr.)
P	**Logan Tyler** (6-0, 197, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

LOUISVILLE
CARDINALS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

22
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Devonte Fields

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Charlotte	
S.9	@SYRACUSE	41-17
S.17	Florida State	21-41
S.24	@MARSHALL	
O.1	@CLEMSON	17-20
O.14	Duke	
O.22	N.C. State	20-13
O.29	@VIRGINIA	38-31
N.5	@BOSTON COLLEGE	17-14
N.12	Wake Forest	20-19
N.17	@HOUSTON	31-34
N.26	Kentucky	38-24

COACH

Bobby Petrino
Seventh year (58-18)
CAREER RECORD: 100-39

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Lonnie Galloway (first year)
Chris Klenakis (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Todd Grantham (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Texas A&M in the Music City Bowl, 27-21)
STADIUM: Papa John's Cardinal Stadium (55,000)
TICKETS: 502-852-5151
SITE: Louisville, Ky.
WEBSITE: gocards.com
TWITTER: @UofLFootball

The return of Bobby Petrino was supposed to mean Louisville would emerge as an offensive juggernaut again upon landing in the ACC.

Two years into Petrino 2.0, the Cardinals can largely thank their defense for so deftly settling in as the third-best program in the Atlantic Division. However, things might be a bit different this fall.

Louisville had the unpleasant combination of an incredibly young offense, quarterback instability and a frontloaded schedule to deal with last season. While largely competitive, the Cardinals weren't as good as the likes of Auburn, Clemson, Florida State and Houston in the first half of the season and found themselves at 2-4.

Eventually, the offense gained experience. In time, it became clear athletic freshman Lamar Jackson was the best option at quarterback (when he was healthy, anyway). In the final six games of the regular season, Louisville faced five teams destined to miss the postseason.

Voila! The Cardinals uncorked a 6-1 run to close out the season, capping it with a Music City Bowl defeat of a Texas A&M bunch that saw its top two quarterbacks transfer prior to its postseason game.

It's debatable whether Louisville actually gains something long-term from this bit of scheduling whimsy. But it did average 35.6 points over its last five games, and that qualifies as notable improvement as Petrino heads into the third season of his second stint as Cardinals' head coach.

If nothing else, it seems he has found a quarterback in Jackson, who rushed for 11 scores, passed for 12 more and averaged 206 yards on the ground in Louisville's last two games.

Theoretically, this should spare the Cardinals of another year of quarterback roulette. Jackson would seem to be the favorite now that he has a year in Petrino's system, with the capable Kyle Bolin as a backup and the versatile Reggie Bonnafon an

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

LB **Devonte Fields**

As an honorable mention All-ACC choice in 2015, Fields led the country in tackles for a loss (22.0), the second most in a single season at Louisville. His 10.5 sacks led the team and were fourth in the ACC. What's more, he played his best when the games mattered most, as 8.5 of his sacks came in the Cards' final four games. The 6-4, 245-pound senior's skills were on full display last November in a 38-24 win at in-state rival Kentucky when he recorded six tackles, 2.5 sacks and 4.5 tackles for loss against the Wildcats.

FIELDS: STEVE ROBERTS / ICON SPORTSWIRE

aggravating variable for opponents to prepare for each week. Things could, of course, change when the season rolls around.

The supporting cast for whoever takes snaps for Louisville is far more seasoned than a year ago. Veterans Jamari Staples and James Quick are among the pass-catching options at the Cardinals' disposal, and incumbent tailback Brandon Radcliff returns as well.

Up front, Louisville brings back four starters from an offensive line that was largely untested entering last season. Sophomore tackle Geron Christian started all 13 games while earning honorable mention All-ACC honors and should be a pivotal piece of a unit that figures to take a step forward after logging so much time last season.

Meanwhile, Louisville's defense absorbed some losses but should remain one of the better run-stopping forces in the conference. Even with end Sheldon Rankins gone, the Cardinals still have tackle DeAngelo Brown and linebacker Keith Kelsey, both of whom project to be among the top players at their respective positions in the conference.

Other notable returnees include outside linebacker Devonte Fields, who rolled up 10.5 sacks and 22.0 tackles for loss in his first season with the Cardinals after arriving from TCU via a junior college. Fields underwent shoulder surgery in the offseason but is expected to be good to go for the opening game.

The starting secondary returns intact, with 6-5 safety Josh Harvey-Clemons (88 tackles) a notable player in that unit. The Cardinals were a solid 45th nationally in pass-efficiency defense, and the combination of experience on the back end and quality pass rush should lead to some improvement.

Put together, it's a team that should have a better chance of pushing the top opponents on its schedule than last year. That's saying something, since the Cardinals put a 20-17 scare into eventual NCAA runner-up Clemson in September.

Louisville once again will be tested early, with Clemson and Florida State among its first five games. The Cardinals are 0-4 against those two programs the last two years, and 8-0 against the rest of the Atlantic Division. The Cardinals have done a credible job in moving from the American Athletic Conference to the ACC, but success against Clemson and Florida State is the ultimate barometer for the program.

Given its ability on both sides of the ball, don't be surprised if Louisville gets on the board against one of the Atlantic heavyweights and emerges as a division contender. But if not, the Cardinals should once again contend for eight or nine wins.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Cardinals filled immediate holes on defense through the junior-college ranks with a pair of early enrollees. They landed their quarterback of the future in Jawon Pass, a U.S. Army All-American. They also added athleticism at wideout. Pass will be the heir apparent to incumbent Lamar Jackson at quarterback. Four-star wide receiver Dez Fitzpatrick chose U of L over Nebraska just before Signing Day. Cornerback Ronald Walker and defensive tackle Chris Williams, the two juco players already on campus, will be asked to help right away.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Jawon Pass,** QB ★★★★
2. **Dez Fitzpatrick,** WR ★★★★
3. **London Iakopo,** S ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Lamar Jackson

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	126.8	135-247-8	54.7	1840	12	153.3

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Lamar Jackson	12	163	960	5.9	11	80.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jamari Staples	10	37	638	17.2	3	63.8

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Keith Kelsey	13	57	50	107

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Devonte Fields	13	10.5	70

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Trumaine Washington	4	57	14.3	1

TEAM TRADITION

Only one jersey and number has been retired at Louisville. It belongs, of course, to legendary former Cardinals quarterback Johnny Unitas. Located just north of the end zone before walking on the field at the Howard Schnellenberger Football Complex is a statue of Unitas that commemorates his stellar playing career. Before the start of each game, players exit the locker room to make their way onto the field, rubbing the statue as they pass it for good luck.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	LOU	OPP
SCORING	373	313
Points Per Game	28.7	24.1
FIRST DOWNS	272	227
Rushing	115	90
Passing	136	112
Penalty	21	25
RUSHING YARDAGE	2223	1563
Yards gained rushing	2697	1981
Yards lost rushing	474	418
Rushing Attempts	491	477
Average Per Rush	4.5	3.3
Average Per Game	171.0	120.2
TDs Rushing	23	11
PASSING YARDAGE	3186	2763
Comp-Att-Int	227-409-15	236-421-17
Average Per Pass	7.8	6.6
Average Per Catch	14.0	11.7
Average Per Game	245.1	212.5
TDs Passing	21	23
TOTAL OFFENSE	5409	4326
Total Plays	900	898
Average Per Play	6.0	4.8
Average Per Game	416.1	332.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	31-625	45-1028
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	30-212	12-57
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-229	15-316
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.2	22.8
PUNT RETURN AVG.	7.1	4.8
INT RETURN AVG.	13.5	21.1
FUMBLES-LOST	27-12	20-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	97-814	80-728
Average Per Game	62.6	56.0
PUNTS-YARDS	70-2791	84-3496
Average Per Punt	39.9	41.6
Net punt average	39.1	40.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:29	30:31
3RD-DOWN CONV.	69/181	71/201
3rd-Down Pct.	38%	35%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/15	8/18
4th-Down Pct.	47%	44%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-247	43-309
MISC. YARDS	0	36
TDS SCORED	47	39
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-21	13-19
ATTENDANCE	294413	381600
Games/Avg Per Game	6/49069	5/51439
Neutral Site Games		2/62203

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
LOUISVILLE	96	99	84	94	0	373
Opponent	79	104	58	72	0	313

5-YEAR RECORD 47-18

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Lamar Jackson** (6-3, 196, So.)
	Kyle Bolin (6-2, 208, Jr.)
RB	**Brandon Radcliff** (5-9, 214, Sr.)
	Jeremy Smith (6-2, 225, Jr.)
LT	**Geron Christian** (6-6, 320, So.)
	Toriano Roundtree (6-6, 295, So.)
LG	**Kiola Mahoni** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
	Khalil Hunter (6-4, 300, Sr.)
C	**Tobijah Hughley** (6-3, 289, Sr.)
	Kevin Austin (6-3, 307, Jr.)
RG	**Kenny Thomas** (6-6, 320, So.)
	Chandler Jones (6-4, 300, Fr.)
RT	**Lukayus McNeil** (6-6, 313, So.)
	Toriano Roundtree (6-6, 295, So.)
TE	**Cole Hikutini** (6-5, 240, Sr.)
	Keith Towbridge (6-5, 261, Sr.)
WR	**Jamari Staples** (6-4, 195, Sr.)
	Ja'Quay Savage (6-3, 214, Jr.)
WR	**James Quick** (6-1, 191, Sr.)
	Traveon Samuel (5-7, 175, So.)
WR	**Jaylen Smith** (6-4, 184, So.)
	Devante Peete (6-6, 203, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Drew Bailey** (6-5, 285, Sr.)
	Chris Williams (6-1, 295, Jr.)
NT	**DeAngelo Brown** (6-1, 308, Sr.)
	Kyle Shortridge (6-2, 305, Jr.)
DE	**Johnny Richardson** (6-3, 322, Jr.)
	G.G. Robinson (6-4, 290, Fr.)
LB	**Devonte Fields** (6-4, 245, Sr.)
	Jonathan Greenard (6-4, 226, Fr.)
LB	**Keith Kelsey** (6-1, 236, Sr.)
	Isaac Stewart (6-2, 236, So.)
LB	**Stacy Thomas** (6-1, 225, Jr.)
	Amonte Caban (6-1, 226, Fr.)
LB	**Trevon Young** (6-4, 229, Sr.)
	James Hearns (6-3, 257, Jr.)
CB	**Trumaine Washington** (5-10, 183, Jr.)
	Ronald Walker (6-1, 195, Jr.)
CB	**Shaq Wiggins** (5-10, 171, Jr.)
	Jaire Alexander (5-11, 170, So.)
S	**Josh Harvey-Clemons** (6-5, 230, Sr.)
	Zykiesis Cannon (6-0, 195, Jr.)
S	**Chucky Williams** (6-2, 204, Jr.)
	Dee Smith (6-1, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Blaton Creque** (5-11, 170, So.)
P	**Mason King** (6-3, 175, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

N.C. STATE
WOLFPACK

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

TE Jaylen Samuels

N.C. State's unspoken strategy the last two years was obvious from the day each season's schedule was released: gorge on a soft nonconference slate and then hope to do enough against the soft bottom half of the ACC's Atlantic Division to find a way into a bowl game.

It worked, too, netting N.C. State an 8-5 mark in 2014 and a step back to 7-6 last year. The Wolfpack opened with four nonconference victories in both seasons, and went a combined 5-1 against Boston College, Syracuse and Wake Forest over the two years. Alas, that leaves room for only two other victories–against North Carolina and Central Florida to close out the '14 season.

It's with this workmanlike backdrop of generally winning the games it should win and losing to superior foes that N.C. State enters its fourth season under coach Dave Doeren. And while fans might want to see the Wolfpack flirt with more, the pieces in place suggest another middle-of-the-division showing this fall.

Gone is quarterback Jacoby Brissett, a two-year starter who threw 20 touchdowns and six interceptions last season. In his stead is sophomore Jalan McClendon, who is the favorite to take over but owns all of 14 career passing attempts.

That wouldn't be as big an issue if N.C. State's offensive line didn't find itself in such flux. The Wolfpack loses three starters up front, and will break in new primary options at both left tackle and center.

There is the benefit of a couple reliable offensive options to fall back on. Senior tailback Matt Dayes, who missed the final month of the season plus a bowl setback against Mississippi State with a foot injury, returns as the primary rushing option. Tight end Jaylen Samuels, who led N.C. State in catches (65) and receiving yards (597) while also rushing for nine touchdowns, will again play a major role.

The Wolfpack faded defensively as the schedule stiffened in the second half of the season, yielding an average of 37.2 points over the final six games. That unit figures to be relatively young this season, with junior defensive end Bradley Chubb (12.0 tackles for loss) among the notable returnees.

N.C. State does not bring back a player who earned all-conference recognition last year. So, with Notre Dame and ever-feisty local rival East Carolina looming outside of the league, the path to six victories is more challenging. The Wolfpack could earn a third bowl bid in a row, but a push toward the top of the Atlantic Division seems unlikely.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	William & Mary	
S.10	@EAST CAROLINA	
S.17	Old Dominion	38-14
O.1	Wake Forest	35-17
O.8	Notre Dame	
O.15	@CLEMSON	41-56
O.22	@LOUISVILLE	13-20
O.29	Boston College	24-8
N.5	Florida State	17-34
N.12	@SYRACUSE	42-29
N.19	Miami (Fla.)	
N.25	@NORTH CAROLINA	34-45

COACH

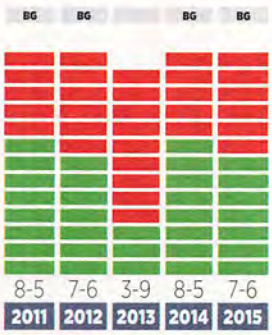
Dave Doeren
Fourth year (18-20)
CAREER RECORD: 41-24

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Eli Drinkwitz (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dave Huxtable (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Mississippi State in the Belk Bowl, 51-28)
STADIUM: Carter-Finley Stadium (57,583)
TICKETS: 919-865-1510
SITE: Raleigh, N.C.
WEBSITE: gopack.com
TWITTER: @PackFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
33-31



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Jalan McClendon (6-5, 212, So.)
RB	Matt Dayes (5-9, 203, Sr.)
LT	Emanuel McGirt Jr. (6-6, 295, Fr.)
LG	Tony Adams (6-2, 315, Jr.)
C	Garrett Bradbury (6-3, 293, So.)
RG	Bryce Kennedy (6-3, 305, Sr.)
RT	Will Richardson (6-6, 303, So.)
TE	Jaylen Samuels (5-11, 223, Jr.)
WR	Jumichael Ramos (6-2, 200, Sr.)
WR	Stephen Louis (6-2, 215, So.)
WR	Nyheim Hines (5-9, 197, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Bradley Chubb (6-4, 273, Jr.)
DT	B.J. Hill (6-4, 300, Jr.)
DT	Kentavius Street (6-2, 290, Jr.)
DE	Darian Roseboro (6-4, 285, So.)
LB	Jerod Fernandez (6-0, 220, Jr.)
LB	Airius Moore (6-0, 237, Jr.)
CB	Mike Stevens (5-11, 190, Jr.)
CB	Jack Tocho (6-0, 200, Sr.)
S	Shawn Boone (5-10, 201, Jr.)
S	Josh Jones (6-2, 215, Jr.)
S	Niles Clark (5-11, 186, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Kyle Bambard (5-8, 190, So.)
P	A.J. Cole III (6-4, 230, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

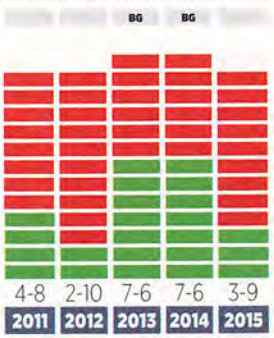
1. **Shug Frazier,** DT ★★★
2. **Isaiah Stallings,** ATH ★★★
3. **Thaddeus Moss,** TE ★★★

After striking gold and landing four of North Carolina's top 10 prospects a cycle before, this group resembles coach Dave Doeren's first two recruiting classes. It's one filled with super evaluations: a mix of out-of-state steals combined with a handful of upside guys. The cornerbacks class, led by Nick McCloud and JJ Givens, was especially solid.

SAMUELS: GERRY BROOME / AP

BOSTON COLLEGE
EAGLES

5-YEAR RECORD
23-39



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

LB **Matt Milano**

Steve Addazio couldn't have asked for a better defense in 2015. The same could not be said of the other side of the ball.

The Boston College coach was caught without a quarterback when sophomore Darius Wade was lost three games into the season. From there, the Eagles usually followed a script of great performances from a defense that ranked first in the country in total yardage allowed, second in rushing yards allowed and fourth in points allowed. Somehow, Boston College ended up 3-9 anyway.

That "somehow," of course, had everything to do with an offense caught shorthanded in all the wrong places, and it prevented Addazio from working the same magic he did in a pair of seven-win seasons to open his tenure. There were no experienced veteran offensive linemen to work with, and the Eagles suffered accordingly.

As soon as Wade was lost to a broken ankle, it became clear Boston College had little hope of mustering offense the rest of the fall. And it didn't, losing games by margins of 9-7 and 3-0 and dropping six games while allowing 20 points or less.

The line will be a year older, and Wade presumably will be healthy enough come the fall, along with sophomore Jeff Smith, who led the Eagles in rushing last year but was a distinct project in the passing game. Patrick Towles, a graduate transfer from Kentucky, could be the answer here after throwing for more than 5,000 yards in his UK career. Regardless, new offensive coordinator Scot Loeffler, who arrives in Chestnut Hill off a stint in the same capacity at Virginia Tech, has plenty of work ahead.

So, too, does Jim Reid, who takes over as defensive coordinator after Don Brown's exit. Brown became a coveted commodity thanks to his aggressive scheme, and Michigan scooped him up to fill its coordinator vacancy. Keeping the Eagles anywhere close to last year's defensive excellence will be a challenge.

Gone are defensive end Connor Wujciak, linebacker Steven Daniels and safety Justin Simmons–though senior linebacker Matt Milano (60 tackles, 17.5 tackles for loss) returns as a disruptive presence. Junior end Harold Landry (15.5 tackles for loss) is another major contributor who figures to be a mainstay.

Between last year's offensive shortcomings and the change of two coordinators, there are countless questions facing Boston College. Addazio was undoubtedly irked at the uptick in penalties, a contrast from his first two years with the Eagles, but his biggest problem was an overmatched offense.

If a quarterback is found and the offense can achieve some respectability, the Eagles can withstand some defensive regression and contend for a bowl bid. If not, they already know what happens when a team musters 73 points in eight ACC games.

5
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Darius Wade (6-0, 204, So.)
FB	Bobby Wolford (6-2, 248, Sr.)
RB	Jon Hilliman (6-0, 224, So.)
LT	Aaron Monteiro (6-7, 336, So.)
LG	Jim Cashman (6-7, 302, Sr.)
C	Jon Baker (6-3, 293, Jr.)
RG	Chris Lindstrom (6-4, 260, So.)
RT	Sam Schmal (6-6, 294, Jr.)
WR	Thadd Smith (5-9, 175, Jr.)
WR	Charlie Callinan (6-4, 224, Jr.)
WR	Elijah Robinson (6-2, 187, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Harold Landry (6-3, 245, Jr.)
DT	Truman Gutapfel (6-3, 281, Sr.)
NT	Ray Smith (6-1, 264, So.)
DE	Kevin Kavalec (6-2, 253, Sr.)
LB	Matt Milano (6-1, 218, Sr.)
LB	Connor Strachan (6-2, 230, Jr.)
LB	Ty Schwab (6-1, 222, Jr.)
CB	Isaac Yiadom (6-1, 184, Jr.)
CB	Kamrin Moore (5-11, 192, Jr.)
S	John Johnson (6-0, 198, Sr.)
S	William Harris (6-2, 193, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Colton Lichtenberg (5-10, 175, So.)
P	Satchel Ziffer (6-4, 212, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Ethan Tucky,** LB ★★★
2. **Anthony Brown,** QB ★★★
3. **Bryce Morais,** DE ★★★

The Eagles found their quarterback of the future in Anthony Brown and kept the train rolling in terms of several quality offensive tackles from areas that mass-produce them. They'll need to amp up their overall speed at all positions, however, to move the program forward.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Georgia Tech*	
S.10	@MASSACHUSETTS**	
S.17	@VIRGINIA TECH	10-26
S.24	Wagner	
O.1	Buffalo	
O.7	Clemson	17-34
O.22	Syracuse	17-20
O.29	@N.C. STATE	8-24
N.5	Louisville	14-17
N.11	@FLORIDA STATE	0-14
N.19	Connecticut	
N.26	@WAKE FOREST	0-3

*At Dublin, Ireland
**At Foxboro, MA

COACH

Steve Addazio
Fourth year (17-21)
CAREER RECORD: 30-32

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Scot Loeffler (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim Reid (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Alumni Stadium (44,500)
TICKETS: 617-552-GoBC
SITE: Chestnut Hill, Mass.
WEBSITE: bceagles.com
TWITTER: @BCFootballNews

MILANO: MICHAEL TURESKI / ICON SPORTSWIRE

WAKE FOREST
DEMON DEACONS

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

TE Cam Serigne

Two years into Dave Clawson's run as head coach at Wake Forest, there's one resounding question: Where's the offense?

Clawson inherited a stagnant program and embraced a massive youth movement. Injecting life into football at a small school without some of the advantages of its resource-rich competitors isn't easy, and the Demon Deacons own back-to-back 3-9 seasons to start the rebuilding project.

If there's to be a jump in Clawson's third year, the offense must take another leap this fall. The Demon Deacons went from utterly dreadful (last nationally in total offense and next to last in rushing offense in 2014) to merely bad (333.4 yards per game, 113th in the country) last year as a pair of young quarterbacks received on-the-job training.

Junior John Wolford has proven durable, starting 22 of the 24 games since he arrived on campus. Sophomore Kendall Hinton got the nod twice last season and provided a boost as a dual threat, finishing the year second on the team with 390 rushing yards and first with seven rushing touchdowns.

Whoever winds up winning the job must hope an offensive line that started redshirt freshmen at both tackle positions last year grows up in a hurry. The Demon Deacons have allowed 88 sacks the last two years and desperately need maturation up front to hold up in league play.

There are valuable weapons in the passing game with Cam Serigne, one of the ACC's best tight ends, and wideout Cortez Lewis, who led Wake Forest in catches (47) and receiving yards (611) as a freshman.

Defensively, end Wendell Dunn is a two-year starter who anchors the front seven, while cornerback Brad Watson led the ACC with 18 passes defended as a junior. One notable hole for Wake Forest is at punter after the graduation of Alex Kinal, the NCAA's career leader in punts (337) and punting yardage (14,102).

The Deacons' defense was a middle-of-the-pack bunch in the ACC, and that could be enough for Clawson to take the next step and guide the program back to the postseason. Pairing that with even a passable offense could get Wake Forest into a bowl game for the first time since 2011.

The schedule works in the Demon Deacons' favor, with a home slate that includes Tulane, Delaware, Syracuse, Army, Virginia and Boston College. Wake Forest won't threaten to win the Atlantic Division, but enough progress to flirt with six victories is plausible.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Tulane	
S.10	@DUKE	21-27
S.17	Delaware	
S.24	@INDIANA	24-31
O.1	@N.C. STATE	17-35
O.8	Syracuse	17-30
O.15	@FLORIDA STATE	16-24
O.29	Army	17-14
N.5	Virginia	
N.12	@LOUISVILLE	19-20
N.19	Clemson	13-33
N.26	Boston College	3-0

COACH

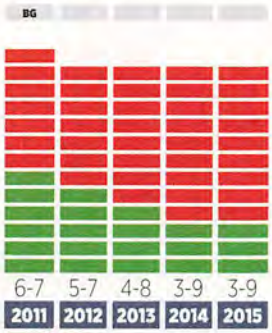
Dave Clawson
Third year (6-18)
CAREER RECORD: 96-99

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Warren Ruggiero (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Mike Elko (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: BB&T Field (31,500)
TICKETS: 1-888-758-DEAC
SITE: Winston-Salem, N.C.
WEBSITE: wakeforestsports.com
TWITTER: @WakeFB

5-YEAR RECORD
21-40



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	John Wolford (6-1, 205, Jr.)
RB	Tyler Bell (5-11, 205, So.)
LT	Justin Herron (6-5, 290, So.)
LG	Tyler Hayworth (6-4, 325, Sr.)
C	Josh Harris (6-4, 310, Sr.)
RG	Phil Haynes (6-4, 290, So.)
RT	Ryan Anderson (6-6, 290, So.)
TE	Cam Serigne (6-3, 245, Jr.)
WR	Cortez Lewis (6-1, 200, So.)
WR	Tabari Hines (5-10, 165, So.)
WR	Jared Crump (6-3, 205, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Duke Ejiofor (6-4, 275, Jr.)
DT	Josh Banks (6-4, 275, Sr.)
DT	Zeek Rodney (6-1, 295, Jr.)
DE	Wendell Dunn (6-3, 250, Jr.)
LB	Marquel Lee (6-3, 235, Sr.)
LB	Zack Wary (6-4, 225, So.)
ROV	Thomas Brown (6-3, 220, Sr.)
CB	Brad Watson (6-0, 190, Sr.)
CB	Dionte Austin (6-0, 165, So.)
S	Ryan Janvion (5-11, 190, Sr.)
S	Cameron Glenn (6-1, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Mike Weaver (6-1, 180, Jr.)
P	Dom Maggio (6-3, 165, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING
1 **Sulaiman Kamara,** DT ★★★
2 **Taleni Suhren,** OT ★★★
3 **Jamie Newman,** QB ★★★

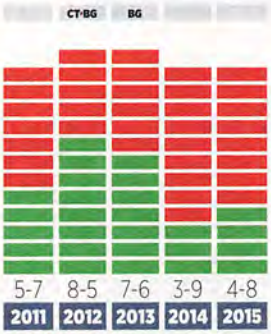
Despite a down 2015 season, the Demon Deacons scored fairly well on the recruiting trail. They beat out several programs for some key gets. Wake also won its share of battles in North Carolina to score some in-state steals. The class has its quarterback of the future in Jamie Newman, upgrades of athletic talent and a solid haul on the defensive line led by tackle Sulaiman Kamara.

SERIGNE: NELL REDMOND / AP

SYRACUSE
ORANGE

QB Eric Dungey

5-YEAR RECORD
27-35



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Eric Dungey (6-3, 212, So.)
RB	Jordan Fredericks (5-10, 215, So.)
LT	Michael Lasker (6-5, 318, Sr.)
LG	Aaron Roberts (6-4, 300, So.)
C	Jason Emerich (6-3, 284, Sr.)
RG	Omari Palmer (6-3, 321, Sr.)
RT	Jamar McGloster (6-7, 330, Jr.)
WR	Ervin Philips (5-11, 180, Jr.)
WR	Brisly Estime (5-9, 182, Sr.)
WR	Steve Ishmael (6-2, 202, Jr.)
WR	Alvin Cornelius (6-1, 187, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jake Pickard (6-5, 254, Fr.)
NT	Kayton Samuels (6-0, 318, So.)
DT	Chris Slayton (6-4, 297, So.)
DE	Kenneth Ruff (6-1, 258, Fr.)
LB	Jonathan Thomas (6-1, 205, Jr.)
LB	Zaire Franklin (6-0, 229, Jr.)
LB	Parris Bennett (6-0, 218, Jr.)
CB	Corey Winfield (6-1, 191, Jr.)
CB	Cordell Hudson (5-11, 175, So.)
S	Antwan Cordy (5-8, 180, Jr.)
S	Chauncey Scissum (6-2, 210, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cole Murphy (6-3, 197, Jr.)
P	Sterling Hofrichter (5-9, 181, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Moe Neal,** ATH ★★★
2. **Sam Heckel,** OT ★★★
3. **Jaquwan Nelson,** DE ★★★

Dino Babers' new Syracuse staff took over in December and, in a condensed period of time, did what they had been doing at Bowling Green: going to hot spots in southern California and south Florida and landing multiple steals. Led by ace recruiter Nick Monroe, the Orange plucked a trio of front-seven defensive recruits from Broward County in the Sunshine State.

Not only was Syracuse an afterthought for most of its first three years in the ACC, it was boring.

The Orange hope the hire of Dino Babers as new head coach can change both of those glaring deficiencies.

Syracuse won only seven games in its last two years under former coach Scott Shafer, including just three in conference play. But to make matters worse, the Orange sputtered badly on offense, finishing 113th nationally in total yardage in 2014 and 118th a season ago. Quarterback injuries didn't help matters, but Syracuse searched in vain for an offensive identity in both years.

Enter Babers, who leaves little doubt about what he plans to do with the Orange. An Art Briles acolyte after spending four years as an assistant at Baylor, Babers has moved up the head-coaching ranks from Eastern Illinois (2012-13) to Bowling Green (2014-15) to Syracuse while spreading the gospel of no-huddle offense.

That philosophy will receive a receptive audience in central New York, and it could work well for a team that plays its home games indoors and on artificial turf. But unlike at Bowling Green, which won the Mid-American Conference the year before his arrival, Babers takes over an also-ran in this gig.

Nonetheless, there are some intriguing pieces to work with. When healthy, Eric Dungey offered some dual-threat promise at quarterback as a freshman. Jordan Fredericks averaged 5.7 yards per carry (and totaled a team-best 607 rushing yards) in his freshman year. And Steve Ishmael, as Syracuse's clear-cut top receiver last year with a team-high 39 catches, showed he could thrive in Babers' system.

Of course, it's also a team that returns only one all-conference selection: Brisly Estime, a third-team pick by the media for his punt-return exploits. Replenishing the program's talent–and nurturing some of the promising underclassmen already in place–is a multiyear task awaiting Babers.

Defensively, the Orange predictably took a step back last season after major graduation hits, and how much this team can thrive will depend on progress in the youthful secondary. Safety Antwan Cordy, whose 12 tackles for loss ranked second in the ACC among defensive backs, is one of the top holdovers inherited by new coordinator Brian Ward's defense.

Syracuse figures to be strong at linebacker, with Zaire Franklin (81 tackles, 11 for loss) returning as an anchor in the middle. Questions remain up front, especially after end Ron Thompson turned pro after his junior year.

Babers promised an electric atmosphere and a fast style of play at his introductory press conference, but this isn't an overnight turnaround job. Bowl contention would be a solid first step in his debut season.

7

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Colgate	
S.9	Louisville	17-41
S.17	South Florida	24-45
S.24	@CONNECTICUT	
O.1	Notre Dame*	
O.8	@WAKE FOREST	30-17
O.15	Virginia Tech	
O.22	@BOSTON COLLEGE	20-17
N.5	@CLEMSON	27-37
N.12	N.C. State	29-42
N.19	Florida State	21-45
N.26	@PITTSBURGH	20-23

At East Rutherford, NJ

COACH

Dino Babers
First year
CAREER RECORD: 37-17

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Sean Lewis (first year)
Mike Lynch (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Brian Ward (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Carrier Dome (49,262)
TICKETS: 1-888-DOMETIX
SITE: Syracuse, N.Y.
WEBSITE: cuse.com
TWITTER: @CuseFootball

DUNGEY: TIMOTHY D. EASLEY / AP

NORTH CAROLINA
TAR HEELS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

18
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Elijah Hood

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Georgia*	
S.10	@ILLINOIS	48-14
S.17	James Madison	
S.24	Pittsburgh	26-19
O.1	@FLORIDA STATE	
O.8	Virginia Tech	30-27
O.15	@MIAMI (FLA.)	59-21
O.22	@VIRGINIA	26-13
N.5	Georgia Tech	38-31
N.10	@DUKE	66-31
N.19	Citadel	
N.25	N.C. State	45-34

At Atlanta, GA

COACH

Larry Fedora
Fifth year (32-20)
CAREER RECORD: 66-39

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Gunter Brewer (fourth year)
Chris Kapilovic (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Gene Chizik (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-3
(Lost to Baylor in the Russell Athletic Bowl, 49-38)
STADIUM: Kenan Memorial Stadium (63,000)
TICKETS: 800-722-4335
SITE: Chapel Hill, N.C.
WEBSITE: goheels.com
TWITTER: @TarHeelFootball

Ever since Mack Brown left for Texas, North Carolina football fans dreamed of a year like last season, when the victories piled up nearly as quickly as the points.

It didn't happen under Carl Torbush, Brown's successor. John Bunting, a program alum, couldn't get it done. Butch Davis loaded up on talent, but he also maxed-out at eight victories and landed the school on probation.

It was ultimately Larry Fedora (with considerable help from quarterback Marquise Williams, running back Elijah Hood and the shrewd hire of defensive coordinator Gene Chizik) who punched through the ceiling of mediocrity and delivered an 11-3 season and a Coastal Division title in Chapel Hill.

Now for the encore, or so the Tar Heels hope.

North Carolina will start 2016 in perhaps the best shape of anyone in the Coastal. Williams is gone, so there is some uncertainty at quarterback. But there remains a lot to like on an explosive offense that rolled up at least 30 points in all but three games last season and averaged 40.7 points for the year.

Hood is the biggest name after rolling up 1,463 yards as a sophomore. The Charlotte product will also have four starting linemen returning, and the Tar Heels could be every bit as effective on the ground as last year when they finished 18th in the country with 224.4 rushing yards per game.

There are "knowns" in the receiving corps as well, with Mack Hollins and Ryan Switzer back. Hollins averaged an eye-popping 24.8 yards per catch, while Switzer led a balanced passing game with 55 receptions and remains an imposing threat as a punt returner.

The heir apparent to Williams, who accounted for 37 touchdowns (24 passing, 13 rushing) as a senior, is junior Mitch Trubisky. He played in nine games last year and completed 40 of 47 passes for 555 yards and six touchdowns with no interceptions. Some

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

RB Elijah Hood

Hood's strong legs played a big role in the Tar Heels securing a program-first ACC Coastal Division title last season. The 6-0, 220-pound junior from Charlotte ranked second in the league with 17 touchdowns and third with 1,463 rushing yards, the second-highest single-season rushing total in Carolina history. Hood, whose career rushing average in Chapel Hill so far is an eye-popping 6.0 yards per carry, put his explosiveness on full display last November in a 45-34 win at N.C. State when he ran for 220 yards on 21 carries, the most rushing yards by a Tar Heel in the history of the series.

HOOD: ROB BROWN / AP

of that came in garbage time and some of it didn't, but those aren't numbers easy to pile up under any circumstances.

North Carolina has averaged at least 32.7 points in each of its four seasons under Fedora, and the Tar Heels will be well-positioned to eclipse that mark again if Trubisky segues into the starting role with ease.

Yet that scoring average underscores the greatest reason for the Tar Heels' stellar 2015 season. Their offense was going to be fine, regardless. It was the progress of a defense that was sieve-like in 2014 and stout against the pass last year that proved to be a major difference.

Chizik, the former Auburn head coach who dabbled in broadcasting for a couple years before returning to coaching, helped engineer the turnaround. Much of the secondary, including cornerbacks Des Lawrence and M.J. Stewart, returns from a bunch that went from 115th nationally in pass-efficiency defense in 2014 to 12th a season ago.

That the Tar Heels were good at stopping anything was a major upgrade over the ability to stop nothing. Still, North Carolina couldn't contain the run, allowing 247.4 yards per game on the ground. Baylor took full advantage of that with 645 rushing yards in the Russell Athletic Bowl, but the Tar Heels gave up at least 200 rushing yards on eight other occasions.

Thus Chizik's next task is making some progress in stopping the run. A team that plays at North Carolina's tempo is bound to hand its opponent more possessions as well, but the Tar Heels' hopes of claiming their first ACC title since 1980 could well hinge on improving on the 5.1 yards per rush they yielded last year.

That said, even with a leaky run defense, North Carolina rattled off 11 consecutive victories after a season-opening setback. In the end, the Tar Heels simply had the capacity to overwhelm opponents with their offense, and it's something they'll no doubt try to do again.

Even with Florida State rotating onto the schedule, things look favorable for North Carolina. Three other Coastal Division teams have new coaches, Georgia Tech is attempting to rebound from its worst season in a generation and Duke took significant graduation hits. The Tar Heels seem like a reasonable favorite, so long as Trubisky emerges as a capable triggerman for Fedora's potent offense.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Carolina is coming off its best season on the field in ages and the true benefits from that success will be seen more in the 2017 class. The 2016 group, with only one composite four-star prospect in the bunch, was focused more on filling key areas of need—especially across the board on defense. Over half of the 26 signees were on defense, including six defensive backs. Keeping linebacker Jonathan Smith in the Tar Heel State was a big hit, as he has the goods to be a rock for the defense for years to come. Safety Myles Dorn was a big steal out of Charlotte. He blew up as a senior and the Tar Heels fended off Ohio State and Clemson for him. The Tar Heels also landed a big defensive tackle in Virginian Kyree Campbell, who had more than two dozen offers.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STARS RATING

1. **Chazz Surratt,** QB ★★★★
2. **Jay-Jay McCargo,** OT ★★★
3. **Tomon Fox,** DE ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Mitch Trubisky

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
9	226.4	40-47-0	85.1	555	6	61.7

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Elijah Hood	14	219	1463	6.7	17	104.5

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Mack Hollins	14	30	745	24.8	8	53.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Donnie Miles	14	76	52	128

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Mikey Bart	14	6.5	28

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
M.J. Stewart	4	21	5.2	0

TEAM TRADITION

On picturesque fall Saturdays in Chapel Hill, N.C., Tar Heel faithful can find Rameses, a live Horned Dorset Sheep, along the sidelines at Kenan Memorial Stadium. Kids can interact with Rameses, who is adorned with a monogrammed blanket on his back and has his horns painted Carolina Blue. The origin of the ram as the mascot dates to 1922, when star fullback Jack Merritt was given the nickname "The Battering Ram."

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	UNC	OPP
SCORING	570	343
Points Per Game	40.7	24.5
FIRST DOWNS	335	344
Rushing	146	184
Passing	158	134
Penalty	31	26
RUSHING YARDAGE	3142	3463
Yards gained rushing	3367	3718
Yards lost rushing	225	255
Rushing Attempts	527	675
Average Per Rush	6.0	5.1
Average Per Game	224.4	247.4
TDs Rushing	40	28
PASSING YARDAGE	3675	2640
Comp-Att-Int	261-409-10	237-435-17
Average Per Pass	9.0	6.1
Average Per Catch	14.1	11.1
Average Per Game	262.5	188.6
TDs Passing	31	16
TOTAL OFFENSE	6817	6103
Total Plays	936	1110
Average Per Play	7.3	5.5
Average Per Game	486.9	435.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	32-663	43-822
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	23-303	5-44
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-204	10-56
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.7	19.1
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.2	8.8
INT RETURN AVG.	12.0	5.6
FUMBLES-LOST	27-9	18-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	80-650	101-883
Average Per Game	46.4	63.1
PUNTS-YARDS	45-1718	63-2553
Average Per Punt	38.2	40.5
Net punt average	35.9	34.1
TIME OF POSS./GAME	25:16	34:44
3RD-DOWN CONV.	80/164	99/224
3rd-Down Pct.	49%	44%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/12	24/37
4th-Down Pct.	58%	65%
SACKS BY-YARDS	23-132	16-112
MISC. YARDS	43	0
TDS SCORED	73	44
FG-ATTEMPTS	20-23	12-22
ATTENDANCE	347500	216866
Games/Avg Per Game	7/49643	4/54216
Neutral Site Games		3/55532

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
NORTH CAROLINA	142	160	127	135	6	570
Opponent	65	86	96	93	3	343

5-YEAR RECORD 39-26

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Mitch Trubisky** (6-3, 220, Jr.)
	Caleb Henderson (6-3, 215, So.)
RB	**Elijah Hood** (6-0, 220, Jr.)
	T.J. Logan (5-10, 190, Sr.)
LT	**Bentley Spain** (6-6, 300, Jr.)
	William Sweet (6-7, 300, Fr.)
LG	**Caleb Peterson** (6-5, 300, Sr.)
	Will Dancy (6-4, 310, Sr.)
C	**Lucas Crowley** (6-3, 290, Sr.)
	Tommy Hatton (6-3, 285, Fr.)
RG	**John Ferranto** (6-6, 300, Sr.)
	Brad Henson (6-5, 290, Jr.)
RT	**Jon Heck** (6-7, 300, Sr.)
	R.J. Prince (6-6, 325, Jr.)
TE	**Brandon Fritts** (6-4, 245, So.)
	Carl Tucker (6-2, 240, Fr.)
WR	**Mack Hollins** (6-4, 210, Sr.)
	Jordan Fieulleteau (6-3, 210, Jr.)
WR	**Ryan Switzer** (5-10, 185, Sr.)
	Austin Proehl (5-10, 175, Jr.)
WR	**Bug Howard** (6-5, 210, Sr.)
	Jordan Cunningham (6-2, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Dajuan Drennon** (6-4, 255, Jr.)
	Malik Carney (6-3, 230, So.)
DT	**Jalen Dalton** (6-6, 280, So.)
	Tyler Powell (6-4, 290, Jr.)
DT	**Nazair Jones** (6-5, 295, Jr.)
	Robert Dinkins (6-1, 270, So.)
DE	**Mikey Bart** (6-3, 270, Sr.)
	Tomon Fox (6-3, 235, Fr.)
LB	**Cayson Collins** (6-1, 235, Jr.)
	Cole Holcomb (6-1, 215, So.)
LB	**Andre Smith** (6-0, 235, So.)
	Jonathan Smith (6-1, 230, Fr.)
LB	**Ayden Bonilla** (6-2, 220, So.)
	Hunter Crafford (6-2, 225, Jr.)
CB	**M.J. Stewart** (5-11, 200, Jr.)
	Corey Bell Jr. (5-9, 170, So.)
CB	**Des Lawrence** (6-1, 185, Sr.)
	Myles Wolfolk (6-0, 190, Fr.)
S	**Dominquie Green** (5-11, 190, Sr.)
	J.K. Britt (6-0, 195, So.)
S	**Donnie Miles** (5-11, 210, Jr.)
	Myles Dorn (6-2, 185, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Nick Weiler** (6-0, 190, Sr.)
P	**Joey Mangili** (6-3, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

MIAMI
HURRICANES

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Brad Kaaya

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Florida A&M	
S.10	Florida Atlantic	44-20
S.17	@APPALACHIAN STATE	
O.1	@GEORGIA TECH	38-21
O.8	Florida State	24-29
O.15	North Carolina	21-59
O.20	@VIRGINIA TECH	30-20
O.29	@NOTRE DAME	
N.5	Pittsburgh	29-24
N.12	@VIRGINIA	27-21
N.19	@N.C. STATE	
N.26	Duke	30-27

COACH

Mark Richt
First year
CAREER RECORD: 146-51

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Thomas Brown (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Manny Diaz (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Washington State in the Sun Bowl, 20-14)
STADIUM: Sun Life Stadium (65,000)
TICKETS: 305-284-2263
SITE: Coral Gables, Fla.
WEBSITE: hurricanesports.com
TWITTER: @CanesFootball

It was anyone's guess where Miami's coaching search would lead when Al Golden was dismissed Oct. 25, one day after a humiliating 58-0 home loss to Clemson. Some big names would be bandied about and program alums would talk about restoring the glory days, but there was also plenty of uncertainty.

The Hurricanes enjoy as much proximity to talent as anyone in the country, but questions about the school's investment in the sport hovered. Would Miami pony up for a coach with a track record at a high level to lift it out of decade-long doldrums that have yielded a 40-40 record in ACC play since 2006?

With an assist from Georgia, the answer was "yes." Mark Richt averaged 9.7 victories a season over 15 years in Athens, but had no SEC titles in the last 10 seasons and no national titles at all. Georgia made a change, and suddenly a Miami alum with a stellar resume was a free agent. The Hurricanes wasted little time swooping in to bring him home.

It's with this serendipitous backdrop that the Hurricanes enter yet another year they are expected to find themselves near the top of the Coastal Division. And while Richt's recruiting ability and familiarity with south Florida are long-term assets, his reputation as a teacher of offense figures to pay the most immediate dividends.

Richt inherits junior quarterback Brad Kaaya, who threw for 3,238 yards, 16 TDs and just five interceptions last season even while dealing with a midseason coaching change. Were it not for Clemson's Deshaun Watson, Kaaya would probably generate some buzz for preseason ACC Player of the Year this summer.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Brad Kaaya**

Kaaya returns for a Miami team that hasn't had a quarterback drafted since Ken Dorsey in 2002, but that should change next April, as the 6-4, 210-pound junior from Los Angeles is considered by most NFL Draft analysts to be the second-best QB available after Clemson's Deshaun Watson. Several current mock drafts have him rated as a top-10 pick. Last year, Kaaya threw for 3,238 yards and 16 touchdowns with only five interceptions. It was the second straight year he threw for more than 3,000 yards. After leading the ACC in passing efficiency as a freshman in 2014 (145.9), Kaaya finished fourth with a 142.1 rating last season. Against rival Florida State last October, he set career marks in completions (29) and attempts (49) while throwing for 405 yards. It was just the 11th 400-yard passing game by a Miami QB since 1980. Kaaya's skillset includes elite field vision and decision-making in the pocket.

He may yet, since he's hardly the only element of the Miami offense that remains in place. Wideout Stacy Coley nearly led the Hurricanes in receiving last year despite missing two games, and he is poised to enjoy

KAAYA: KEITH SRAKOCIC / AP

the best season of his career as a senior.

Tailbacks Joseph Yearby (1,002 yards rushing in 2015) and Mark Walton (team-high nine rushing TDs) could again provide a one-two punch out of the backfield, though the running game overall finished last season an anemic 117th nationally with just 119.9 yards per game.

Whether that gets better will hinge on an offensive line that returns all five primary starters, three of whom are juniors. Whether the struggles up front were simply a product of inexperience (which should no longer be an issue) or a lack of talent (something that's far more difficult to fix) will be determined soon enough. If it's the former, the line has the potential to emerge as a strength under the tutelage of Richt and his staff.

The defense poses more considerable concerns for the Hurricanes, who ranked 69th nationally in total defense. Graduation coupled with cornerback Artie Burns' decision to turn pro took considerable experience away from the secondary, although cornerback Corn Elder (who emerged as a starter late in the season) and safety Rayshawn Jenkins return.

Jermaine Grace, Miami's leader in tackles last season with 79, returns to anchor a linebacking corps that returns all three starters. Junior Al-Quadin Muhammad shifts to defensive end after pacing the Hurricanes in sacks (5) and tackles for loss (8.5) in 2015.

Muhammad's move is part of a defensive overhaul that includes changing the 3-4 scheme utilized under Golden to a 4-3 setup under new defensive coordinator Manny Diaz. Perhaps that will make the Hurricanes more disruptive after they finished 105th nationally (and 12th in the ACC) in tackles for loss last season.

Even a decade of mediocrity has not tamed local expectations for Miami, which is now 15 years removed from its last national championship. The disparity between fans' standards for the program and the on-field results remains striking. Playing far off-campus at an NFL stadium in front of far-below-capacity crowds has not helped.

Richt, unlike his predecessor, has a good idea what he's getting into and is about as good a blend of fit and ability as the Hurricanes could have hoped for. He knows the terrain, understands what it's like to recruit in a crucible and could be reinvigorated by a new challenge at this stage in his career. Whether that's enough to justify considerable optimism for this year is unknown, but there is reason to believe Miami will be on the upswing soon enough.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Hurricanes' new staff landed the program's best linebacker class in years. Miami also added two quality four-star wideouts in Ahmmon Richards and Sam Bruce. The 'Canes signed a pair of four-star defensive ends with Joseph Jackson and Patrick Bethel. It's a collection that upgrades talent in some key areas. All three linebackers, along with four-star quarterback Jack Allison and Bethel, enrolled early. U.S. Army All-American Malek Young will be asked to help right away at cornerback. Four-star running back Travis Homer figures to do the same. Miami also added the son of Miami and Dallas Cowboys legend Michael Irvin, tight end Michael Irvin Jr.

TOP SIGNEES

1. **Sam Bruce,** WR ★★★★
2. **Shaquille Quarterman,** LB ★★★★
3. **Ahmmon Richards,** WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Brad Kaaya

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	142.1	238-389-5	61.2	3238	16	269.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Joseph Yearby	13	205	1002	4.9	6	77.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Stacy Coley	11	47	689	14.7	4	62.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jermaine Grace	13	44	35	79

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Al-Quaddin Muhammad	12	5.0	26

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Rayshawn Jenkins	3	40	13.3	0

TEAM TRADITION

Since the 1950s, Miami has entered the field through a cloud of billowing white smoke. Former university transportation director Bob Nalette started the tradition, using fire extinguishers to create the smoke while also adding the sound of a hurricane blasting over the sound system. It remains one of the college game's great entrances, and it even includes flags above the tunnel that blow, symbolizing the calm before the storm.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MIA	OPP
SCORING	361	366
Points Per Game	27.8	28.2
FIRST DOWNS	249	296
Rushing	79	134
Passing	152	127
Penalty	18	35
RUSHING YARDAGE	1559	2622
Yards gained rushing	1844	2933
Yards lost rushing	285	311
Rushing Attempts	424	498
Average Per Rush	3.7	5.3
Average Per Game	119.9	201.7
TDs Rushing	20	25
PASSING YARDAGE	3602	2646
Comp-Att-Int	268-449-9	247-413-15
Average Per Pass	8.0	6.4
Average Per Catch	13.4	10.7
Average Per Game	277.1	203.5
TDs Passing	18	16
TOTAL OFFENSE	5161	5268
Total Plays	873	911
Average Per Play	5.9	5.8
Average Per Game	397.0	405.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	30-575	41-870
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-198	18-222
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-172	9-207
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.2	21.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.0	12.3
INT RETURN AVG.	11.5	23.0
FUMBLES-LOST	20-5	23-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	121-1094	88-758
Average Per Game	84.2	58.3
PUNTS-YARDS	67-2846	60-2434
Average Per Punt	42.5	40.6
Net punt average	37.4	36.6
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:41	29:19
3RD-DOWN CONV.	64/183	64/163
3rd-Down Pct.	35%	39%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/18	7/16
4th-Down Pct.	72%	44%
SACKS BY-YARDS	26-167	19-148
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	41	43
FG-ATTEMPTS	25-30	20-25
ATTENDANCE	285363	284020
Games/Avg Per Game	6/47560	6/47337
Neutral Site Games		1/41180

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
MIAMI	95	108	61	94	3	361
Opponent	90	104	57	115	0	366

5-YEAR RECORD 36-27

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Brad Kaaya** (6-4, 210, Jr.)
	Malik Rosier (6-1, 212, So.)
RB	**Joseph Yearby** (5-9, 202, Jr.)
	Mark Walton (5-10, 195, So.)
LT	**Trevor Darling** (6-5, 316, Jr.)
	Bar Milo (6-6, 296, Fr.)
LG	**KC McDermott** (6-6, 310, Jr.)
	Alex Gall (6-5, 312, Sr.)
C	**Nick Linder** (6-3, 302, Jr.)
	Alex Gall (6-5, 312, Sr.)
RG	**Danny Isidora** (6-4, 325, Sr.)
	Tyler Gauthier (6-5, 315, So.)
RT	**Tyree St. Louis** (6-5, 312, So.)
	Sunny Odogwu (6-8, 318, Jr.)
TE	**David Njoku** (6-4, 244, So.)
	Standish Dobard (6-4, 262, Sr.)
WR	**Stacy Coley** (6-1, 187, Sr.)
	Ahmmon Richards (6-1, 181, Fr.)
WR	**Braxton Berrios** (5-9, 180, Jr.)
	Sam Bruce (5-8, 180, Fr.)
WR	**Lawrence Cager** (6-5, 215, So.)
	Darrell Langham (6-4, 218, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Al-Quadin Muhammad** (6-3, 256, Jr.)
	Trent Harris (6-2, 251, Jr.)
DT	**Kendrick Norton** (6-3, 318, So.)
	Courtel Jenkins (6-1, 311, Jr.)
DT	**Gerald Willis** (6-2, 280, So.)
	Anthony Moten (6-4, 299, Jr.)
DE	**Chad Thomas** (6-5, 275, Jr.)
	RJ McIntosh (6-4, 291, So.)
LB	**Darrion Owens** (6-3, 247, Jr.)
	Charles Perry (6-1, 220, So.)
LB	**Shaquille Quarterman** (6-1, 239, Fr.)
	Jamie Gordinier (6-4, 236, Fr.)
LB	**Jermaine Grace** (6-1, 221, Sr.)
	Michael Pinckney (6-0, 213, Fr.)
CB	**Corn Elder** (5-10, 183, Sr.)
	Michael Jackson (6-2, 195, So.)
CB	**Sheldrick Redwine** (6-1, 196, So.)
	Terrance Henley (6-0, 172, So.)
S	**Jamal Carter** (6-1, 209, Sr.)
	Jaquan Johnson (5-10, 190, So.)
S	**Rayshawn Jenkins** (6-1, 208, Sr.)
	Robert Knowles (6-0, 190, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Michael Badgley** (5-10, 180, Jr.)
P	**Justin Vogel** (6-4, 208, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

VIRGINIA TECH
HOKIES

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Isaiah Ford

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Liberty	
S.10	Tennessee*	
S.17	Boston College	26-10
S.24	East Carolina	28-35
O.8	@NORTH CAROLINA	27-30
O.15	@SYRACUSE	
O.20	Miami (Fla.)	20-30
O.27	@PITTSBURGH	13-17
N.5	@DUKE	43-45
N.12	Georgia Tech	23-21
N.19	@NOTRE DAME	
N.26	Virginia	23-20

At Bristol, TN

COACH

Justin Fuente
First year
CAREER RECORD: 26-24

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brad Cornelsen (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Bud Foster (22nd year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Tulsa in the Independence Bowl, 55-52)
STADIUM: Lane Stadium (65,632)
TICKETS: 800-828-3244
SITE: Blacksburg, Va.
WEBSITE: hokiesports.com
TWITTER: @VT_Football

It's pretty much a cliché to declare the hiring of a coach as the start of a new era. After all, most schools swap football coaches a couple times a decade–at least. Virginia Tech is not most schools.

Program patriarch Frank Beamer, a former player who went on to lead the Hokies for 29 seasons and was the longest-tenured head coach in the FBS, announced his retirement in November and then embarked on a farewell tour for much of the next two months. The Hokies got bowl-eligible, beat Virginia (yet again) and sealed a winning season with a wild Independence Bowl defeat of Tulsa.

While Beamer was rightfully being honored for his massive accomplishments, athletic director Whit Babcock wasted little time doing his best to secure the Hokies' future. A day after the Hokies wrapped up the regular season, the school announced Memphis coach Justin Fuente was on his way to Blacksburg.

Few emerge from the Memphis football quagmire and move on to bigger and better things, but Fuente is a notable exception after lifting the Tigers into contention in the American Athletic Conference. He takes over a Virginia Tech program that quickly became the class of the ACC upon joining the league in 2004, but slipped over the last four seasons.

Even Beamer acknowledged the Hokies weren't where they were when he stepped down, and there's no overlooking the mundane 29-23 mark and no division titles since 2012. Before then, Virginia Tech rattled off eight consecutive 10-win seasons.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

WR **Isaiah Ford**

Ford earned first-team All-ACC honors in 2015, setting single-season school records for catches (75) and receiving touchdowns (11) while piling up 1,164 yards in receptions. The 6-2, 190-pound junior had four different games in which he had 100-plus yards receiving, including 12 catches for 227 yards and a touchdown against Tulsa. Ford is the Hokies' best offensive player and will be a strong All-America candidate. He has started 23 of 26 games at Tech since arriving as a true freshman in 2014 from Trinity Christian High in Jacksonville, Fla.

The Hokies are as financially invested in football as anyone in the competitive Coastal Division, and they have a new coach with an impressive track record in his first head-coaching job. The question now becomes how quickly it can all translate into the success Virginia Tech grew accustomed to last decade.

And that depends on a number of factors.

It depends on how effectively Fuente and offensive coordinator Brad Cornelsen (who also comes from Memphis) can identify a quarterback to replace the graduated Michael

FORD: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP

Brewer. It could be Brenden Motley, who started for a chunk of last season when Brewer was injured. It could be sophomore Dwayne Lawson. Fuente also has added a junior-college transfer (Jerod Evans) and an early-enrollee freshman (Josh Jackson).

It depends on how quickly the Hokies pick up on the new scheme, though they aren't lacking for viable skill-position options. Tailback Travon McMillian rushed for 1,043 yards last season, and junior wideout Isaiah Ford rolled up 1,164 yards and 11 touchdowns despite inconsistent quarterback play. Big tight end Bucky Hodges (6-7, 245 pounds) is also back after collecting six touchdown catches a year ago.

And it also depends on the defense, which longtime Beamer aide Bud Foster remains in charge of even after the departure of his old boss. Fuente's decision to retain Foster suggests both a comfort in embracing a Hokie institution and, perhaps more importantly, a streak of if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it pragmatism.

Foster's units routinely withstand personnel losses to graduation and the NFL, so the departure of cornerback Kendall Fuller and three veterans up front is nothing new. Still, the defensive line will have a new look without the likes of Luther Maddy and Dadi Nicolas, though end Ken Ekanem (4.5 sacks, 9.5 tackles for loss) figures to be a mainstay.

Likewise, there are answers in a Fuller-less secondary with safety Chuck Clark returning after collecting a team-high 107 tackles last season. Cornerback Brandon Facyson is also back, though he missed the spring while recovering from a knee injury.

Foster's presence provides some continuity in a program that has counted on that intangible for decades, but an invigorated offense figures to make a substantial difference as well. After back-to-back 7-6 campaigns, there could be enough in place to leap back to the top of the division.

However, it's equally possible there is a transition period for Fuente, his staff and his new players. Expecting a continuation of the 23-year bowl streak Beamer bequeathed his successor is reasonable, and there's nothing wrong with hoping to inch back toward 10 victories.

Crossover games against struggling Atlantic Division programs Boston College and Syracuse provide a bit of a schedule advantage, but there are tough nonconference tasks against Tennessee (at NASCAR's Bristol Motor Speedway) and at Notre Dame. The Hokies could contend in the Coastal, but it's equally possible they make only modest progress in the win column.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Hokies signed one of the league's best incoming wide-receiving corps, a key for their new spread offense under new coach Justin Fuente. The group features Phil Patterson, Divine Deablo, Eric Kumah and Samuel Denmark. They also evaluated well, like usual, and landed a few gems (especially in Virginia) who weren't highly recruited but have solid upsides. The Hokies reloaded in the secondary and the star of that group is cornerback Khalil Ladler, who is already on campus. Virginia Tech also inked their potential quarterback of the future in Josh Jackson.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Jerod Evans,** QB ★★★★
2. **Khalil Ladler,** CB ★★★
3. **Divine Deablo,** WR ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Brenden Motley

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
10	128.9	92-164-7	56.1	1155	11	115.5

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Travon McMillian	13	200	1043	5.2	7	80.2

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Isaiah Ford	13	75	1164	15.5	11	89.5

TACKLES

	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Chuck Clark	13	65	42	107

SACKS

	GP	No.	Yards
Ken Ekanem	13	4.5	18

INTERCEPTIONS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Adonis Alexander	4	-4	-1.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

In response to their rivalry with VMI, Virginia Tech's corps of cadets adopted a cannon to fire off at games. The cannon was completed Nov. 22, 1963, and the two cadets who went to pick it up heard the news of John F. Kennedy's assassination that same day on the radio. In honor of JFK's naval background, the cannon was named "Skipper." The blasts from Skipper can be heard as the Hokies enter Lane Stadium and after each Virginia Tech score.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	VT	OPP
SCORING	403	342
Points Per Game	31.0	26.3
FIRST DOWNS	261	238
Rushing	118	101
Passing	123	108
Penalty	20	29
RUSHING YARDAGE	2071	2349
Yards gained rushing	2472	2713
Yards lost rushing	401	364
Rushing Attempts	545	514
Average Per Rush	3.8	4.6
Average Per Game	159.3	180.7
TDs Rushing	19	22
PASSING YARDAGE	2936	2459
Comp-Att-Int	223-394-14	175-353-10
Average Per Pass	7.5	7.0
Average Per Catch	13.2	14.1
Average Per Game	225.8	189.2
TDs Passing	24	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	5007	4808
Total Plays	939	867
Average Per Play	5.3	5.5
Average Per Game	385.2	369.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	34-757	25-512
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	32-275	19-54
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	10-12	14-110
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.3	20.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.6	2.8
INT RETURN AVG.	1.2	7.9
FUMBLES-LOST	16-7	31-15
PENALTIES-YARDS	96-817	95-751
Average Per Game	62.8	57.8
PUNTS-YARDS	71-3002	76-3107
Average Per Punt	42.3	40.9
Net punt average	38.7	35.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:26	28:34
3RD-DOWN CONV.	74/193	63/188
3rd-Down Pct.	38%	34%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/13	10/20
4th-Down Pct.	62%	50%
SACKS BY-YARDS	26-195	34-254
MISC. YARDS	1	24
TDS SCORED	48	42
FG-ATTEMPTS	23-31	16-22
ATTENDANCE	364942	277467
Games/Avg Per Game	6/60824	6/46245
Neutral Site Games		1/31289

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
VIRGINIA TECH	85	123	74	99	22	403
Opponent	117	47	77	74	27	342

5-YEAR RECORD 40-26

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Brenden Motley** (6-3, 225, Sr.)
	Jerod Evans (6-4, 235, Jr.)
FB	**Sam Rogers** (5-10, 228, Sr.)
	Steven Peoples (5-9, 218, So.)
RB	**Travon McMillian** (6-0, 200, So.)
	Shai McKenzie (5-11, 215, So.)
LT	**Jonathan McLaughlin** (6-5, 292, Sr.)
	Yosuah Nijman (6-8, 298, So.)
LG	**Wyatt Teller** (6-5, 304, Jr.)
	Billy Ray Mitchell (6-4, 286, So.)
C	**Eric Gallo** (6-2, 297, Jr.)
	Kyle Chung (6-4, 290, Jr.)
RG	**Augie Conte** (6-6, 303, Sr.)
	Colt Pettit (6-4, 298, So.)
RT	**Parker Osterloh** (6-8, 336, Jr.)
	Demetri Moore (6-5, 305, Jr.)
TE	**Bucky Hodges** (6-7, 245, Jr.)
	Chris Durkin (6-4, 232, So.)
WR	**Isaiah Ford** (6-2, 190, Jr.)
	Jaylen Bradshaw (6-1, 198, So.)
WR	**Cam Phillips** (6-1, 198, Jr.)
	Divine Deablo (6-3, 210, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Seth Dooley** (6-6, 239, Jr.)
	Vinny Mihota (6-5, 270, So.)
DT	**Nigel Williams** (6-4, 295, Sr.)
	Ricky Walker (6-2, 288, So.)
NT	**Woody Baron** (6-1, 275, Sr.)
	Tim Settle (6-3, 344, Fr.)
DE	**Ken Ekanem** (6-3, 255, Sr.)
	Trevon Hill (6-5, 234, Fr.)
LB	**Tremaine Edmunds** (6-5, 236, So.)
	Jamieon Moss (6-2, 220, Jr.)
LB	**Andrew Motuapuaka** (6-0, 235, Jr.)
	Carson Lydon (6-2, 237, So.)
CB	**Brandon Facyson** (6-2, 191, Jr.)
	Greg Stroman (6-1, 170, Jr.)
CB	**Adonis Alexander** (6-3, 197, So.)
	Greg Stroman (6-1, 170, Jr.)
ROV	**Terrell Edmunds** (6-1, 201, So.)
	Jahque Alleyne (6-1, 175, So.)
NB	**Mook Reynolds** (6-1, 184, So.)
	Anthony Shegog (6-3, 212, Jr.)
S	**Chuck Clark** (6-1, 204, Sr.)
	Der'Woun Greene (5-11, 194, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Joey Slye** (6-1, 207, Jr.)
P	**Mitchell Ludwig** (5-11, 200, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

GEORGIA TECH
YELLOW JACKETS

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

LB Brant Mitchell

There's an unusual situation this season at ever-steady Georgia Tech, which intersperses an occasional great season into a long string of solid ones.

The Yellow Jackets are coming off their first losing season since 1996, a stunning 3-9 nosedive just a year after earning 11 victories and winning the Orange Bowl. Georgia Tech was largely competitive, but went just 1-6 in games decided by eight points or less.

No one saw it coming–not the ACC media who have an annual tradition of underrating Tech but installed it as a Coastal Division favorite, and certainly not the Yellow Jackets themselves.

In the end, the problems were clear enough: As good as quarterback Justin Thomas was as a sophomore, his chances of success the following year dimmed with so much inexperience surrounding him on offense. The Yellow Jackets' backs and receivers were particularly young, and freshmen closed out the year starting at both tackle spots.

Thomas is back for his senior year, so Tech has more answers at quarterback entering the season than much of the ACC. Sophomores Marcus Marshall (654 yards) and Clinton Lynch (457) joined Thomas as the Yellow Jackets' top rushers last season, and both should be better with an extra year of seasoning.

Improved line play will be required as well, especially after Tech dipped from a nation-leading 342.1 rushing yards per game in 2014 to 256.2 yards a contest last year. The Yellow Jackets also plummeted from a third-down-conversion rate of 57.9 percent to 34.9 percent, which prevented them from controlling the clock like in past seasons.

A middle-of-the-road defense helped keep Tech in games last year, especially in the latter half of the season, but there are major questions entering this fall. The unit's best player, tackle Adam Gotsis, graduated, and the Yellow Jackets must replace four starters in their secondary.

Look for linebacker P.J. Davis, who led the Jackets in tackles (77) and shared the team lead in tackles for loss (6.5), and defensive end KeShun Freeman to have major roles.

Nearly everything went right for the Yellow Jackets in 2014, and just about everything went wrong in 2015 (except for Lance Austin's wild return of a missed field goal for a touchdown as time expired to upset Florida State).

Expect some equilibrium this year, with Georgia Tech finding a way to bounce back after its 18-year bowl streak unceremoniously ended last fall. A more experienced offense coupled with a known quantity at QB should permit the Jackets to resume their place as a team capable of creating headaches for many foes in the ACC.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Boston College*	
S.10	Mercer	
S.17	Vanderbilt	
S.22	Clemson	24-43
O.1	Miami (Fla.)	21-38
O.8	@PITTSBURGH	28-31
O.15	Georgia Southern	
O.29	Duke	20-34
N.5	@NORTH CAROLINA	31-38
N.12	@VIRGINIA TECH	21-23
N.19	Virginia	21-27
N.26	@GEORGIA	7-13

At Dublin, Ireland

COACH

Paul Johnson
Ninth year (62-44)
CAREER RECORD: 169-83

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Paul Johnson (ninth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ted Roof (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Bobby Dodd Stadium (55,000)
TICKETS: 888-TECH-TIX
SITE: Atlanta
WEBSITE: ramblinwreck.com
TWITTER: @GeorgiaTechFB

5-YEAR RECORD
36-30

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Justin Thomas (5-11, 185, Sr.)
FB	Marcus Marshall (5-10, 212, So.)
SB	Clinton Lynch (6-0, 187, So.)
SB	Isiah Willis (5-9, 195, Sr.)
LT	Trey Klock (6-4, 285, So.)
LG	Andrew Marshall (6-4, 282, Jr.)
C	Freddie Burden (6-4, 299, Sr.)
RG	Shamire Devine (6-7, 386, Jr.)
RT	Will Bryan (6-4, 281, So.)
WR	Ricky Jeune (6-3, 212, Jr.)
WR	Brad Stewart (6-1, 197, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	KeShun Freeman (6-2, 250, Jr.)
NT	K. Cerge-Henderson (6-1, 295, So.)
DT	Patrick Gamble (6-5, 277, Sr.)
DE	Rod Rook-Chungong (6-3, 245, Sr.)
LB	Brant Mitchell (6-2, 236, So.)
LB	P.J. Davis (5-11, 231, Sr.)
CB	Lance Austin (5-10, 183, Jr.)
CB	Step Durham (5-11, 194, Jr.)
S	Lawrence Austin (5-9, 185, Jr.)
S	Corey Griffin (6-2, 195, Jr.)
S	A.J. Gray (6-1, 215, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Harrison Butker (6-3, 210, Sr.)
P	Ryan Rodwell (6-2, 207, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247 SPORTS

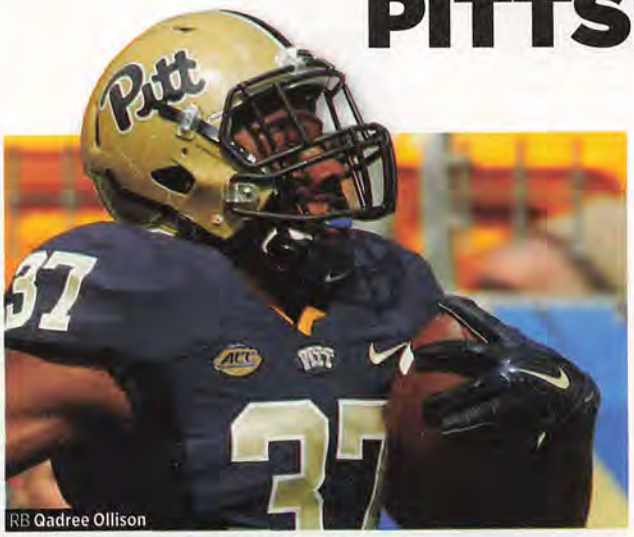
TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Jordan Woods,** DE ★★★
2 **Parker Braun,** OG ★★★
3 **Emmanuel Bridges,** LB ★★★

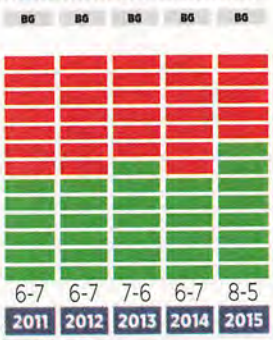
Georgia Tech inked a smaller class than usual, with 11 of its 18 signees coming from in-state, which is the program norm under the Paul Johnson regime. This is a group that is, at some spots, absent of length, but it's one that fits what the Yellow Jackets are trying to accomplish in their schemes on both sides of the ball. Defensive end Jordan Woods was a big pull out of Florida, opting for the Yellow Jackets over Tennessee and West Virginia.

MITCHELL: RICHARD SHIRO / AP

PITTSBURGH
PANTHERS


RB Qadree Ollison

5-YEAR RECORD
33-32



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Nathan Peterman (6-2, 225, Sr.)
FB	George Aston (6-0, 240, So.)
RB	Qadree Ollison (6-2, 230, So.)
LT	Adam Bisnowaty (6-6, 300, Sr.)
LG	Dorian Johnson (6-5, 300, Sr.)
C	Alex Officer (6-4, 335, Jr.)
RG	Alex Bookser (6-6, 310, So.)
RT	Brian O'Neill (6-6, 300, So.)
TE	Scott Orndoff (6-5, 265, Sr.)
WR	Dontez Ford (6-2, 215, Sr.)
WR	Zach Challingsworth (6-2, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ejuan Price (6-0, 250, Sr.)
NT	Tyrique Jarrett (6-3, 335, Sr.)
DT	Jeremiah Talent (6-2, 295, Jr.)
DE	Dewayne Hendrix (6-4, 270, So.)
LB	Mike Caprara (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LB	Matt Galambos (6-2, 240, Sr.)
LB	Jalen Williams (6-2, 210, So.)
CB	Avonte Maddox (5-9, 170, Jr.)
CB	Phillipie Motley (5-10, 180, So.)
S	Jordan Whitehead (5-11, 185, So.)
S	Terrish Webb (5-11, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Chris Blewitt (5-9, 190, Sr.)
P	Ryan Winslow (6-5, 210, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 Damar Hamlin, CB ★★★★
2 George Hill, ATH ★★★★
3 Keyshon Camp, DT ★★★★

Pittsburgh signed its highest-ranked class since joining the ACC. It's a group that's filled with upside prospects and quietly loaded with skilled athletes. The Panthers usually are able to do well along the lines and they did find length there in the 2016 cycle. But this group adds a dimension of athleticism and amps up the program's overall skill.

AP / KEITH SRAKOCIC

It didn't end the way Pat Narduzzi would have liked, but there's little question his first season at Pittsburgh represented a step forward for a program that's sought firm footing for the last half-dozen years.

The Panthers found themselves in contention for the ACC's Coastal Division title. They were bowl-eligible by the end of October. And they developed and embraced a grind-it-out identity befitting their home city, something they haven't enjoyed after years of cycling through coaches and schemes.

Back-to-back losses to Miami and Navy to wrap up the season left Pitt at 8-5, but it provided a strong foundation for 2016–though that's hardly the most compelling storyline for these Panthers.

Tailback James Conner, the ACC's Player of the Year in 2014, suffered a knee injury in 2015's season opener and missed the rest of the year. Yet it was hardly his biggest setback; he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma in the fall and the redshirt junior's status for this season is uncertain. However, he participated in offseason workouts and aims to return to the field.

In his stead, Qadree Ollison rushed for 1,121 yards and 11 touchdowns to earn honors as ACC Offensive Rookie of the Year. He and quarterback Nathan Peterman, who tossed 20 touchdowns against eight interceptions after supplanting incumbent starter Chad Voytik, both return to anchor the Pittsburgh offense.

The Panthers will have to find a primary receiver after Tyler Boyd turned pro after his junior year. Boyd leaves as the program's all-time leader in catches and receiving yards. Dontez Ford, who averaged 19.4 yards per catch opposite Boyd last season, is a candidate to take on a greater role.

While Narduzzi's presence provides plenty of stability, the Panthers do have a new offensive coordinator. Jim Chaney left for Georgia after one year directing the Pitt attack, and ex-N.C. State offensive coordinator Matt Canada takes his place.

The defense, which ranked 37th nationally in yardage allowed, brings back eight starters and has productive options scattered all over the field. Perhaps the most prominent is end Ejuan Price, who finally enjoyed a healthy season as a junior and rolled up 19.5 tackles for loss and 11.5 sacks.

Linebacker Matt Galambos enters his third season as a starter and is coming off an 88-tackle, five-sack campaign. Then there's safety Jordan Whitehead, who had a team-best 109 stops (and also dabbled as a running back) while earning ACC Rookie of the Year. He should continue to progress and could be one of the conference's top defensive players as a sophomore.

5
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

PITT

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Villanova	
S.10	Penn State	
S.17	@OKLAHOMA STATE	
S.24	@NORTH CAROLINA	19-26
O.1	Marshall	
O.8	Georgia Tech	31-28
O.15	@VIRGINIA	26-19
O.27	Virginia Tech	17-13
N.5	@MIAMI (FLA.)	24-29
N.12	@CLEMSON	
N.19	Duke	31-13
N.26	Syracuse	23-20

COACH

Pat Narduzzi
Second year (8-5)
CAREER RECORD: 8-5

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt Canada (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Josh Conklin (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Navy in the Military Bowl, 44-28)
STADIUM: Heinz Field (68,400)
TICKETS: 800-643-PITT
SITE: Pittsburgh
WEBSITE: pittsburghpanthers.com
TWITTER: @GoPittFootball

DUKE
BLUE DEVILS

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Jela Duncan

Duke checked off another milestone last year in its turnaround under coach David Cutcliffe, breaking through for its first bowl victory since the 1960 season.

Still, after a four-game slide late in the season and a major loss on both sides of the ball (one to graduation, the other in thoroughly unexpected fashion), the Blue Devils figure to have trouble matching their impressive nine-win average from the last three years.

Gone is safety Jeremy Cash, the ACC's Defensive Player of the Year, and with him goes an uncanny knack for timely plays that a defense that grew leakier as last season unfolded came to rely upon. Cash rolled up 18 tackles for loss, but the end of his three-year run in Durham could be anticipated.

The same isn't the case for senior quarterback Thomas Sirk, who led the Blue Devils in both rushing and passing a season ago and accounted for 24 total touchdowns as a first-year starter. He ruptured his left Achilles tendon in a team conditioning session in early February, and his availability for the fall is in question.

It is the second major Achilles injury for Sirk (he missed all of 2013 after surgery to repair his right Achilles), and it likely leaves Duke in search of its third starting quarterback in as many seasons. The obvious candidate is redshirt junior Parker Boehme, who functioned largely as a change-of-pace option last year but started a loss against Pittsburgh and is the only scholarship quarterback in the program besides Sirk with game experience.

Duke also saw its top receiver, its most heavily used running back and two key offensive linemen (including all-conference center Matt Skura) depart. However, the Blue Devils do return tailback Jela Duncan (460 yards, 6.9 per rush) and wideout T.J. Rahming, who ranked second on the roster in receiving yards (571) as a true freshman.

The defense is a more experienced bunch, though it has two starters to replace up front in addition to Cash and linebacker Dwayne Norman. Look for senior DeVon Edwards, a starter at safety since the middle of his freshman year as well as an all-conference kickoff returner, to play a pivotal role for the Blue Devils as he moves to cornerback.

The turnaround Cutcliffe has engineered is remarkable for anyone who watched Duke frequently threaten to turn in winless seasons throughout the 1990s and 2000s. But no program is completely invulnerable to a down year, and the Blue Devils don't enjoy many certainties heading into the fall. While another bowl trip is plausible, contention in the Coastal Division could prove out of reach for this bunch.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	N.C. Central	55-0
S.10	Wake Forest	27-21
S.17	@NORTHWESTERN	10-19
S.24	@NOTRE DAME	
O.1	Virginia	34-42
O.8	Army	44-3
O.14	@LOUISVILLE	
O.29	@GEORGIA TECH	34-20
N.5	Virginia Tech	45-43
N.10	North Carolina	31-66
N.19	@PITTSBURGH	13-31
N.26	@MIAMI (FLA.)	27-30

COACH

David Cutcliffe
Ninth year (48-53)
CAREER RECORD: 92-82

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Zac Roper (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jim Knowles (seventh year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Indiana in the Pinstripe Bowl, 44-41)
STADIUM: Wallace Wade Stadium (40,000)
TICKETS: 919-681-BLUE
SITE: Durham, N.C.
WEBSITE: goduke.com
TWITTER: @Duke_FB

5-YEAR RECORD
36-29

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Parker Boehme (6-2, 220, Jr.)
RB	Jela Duncan (5-10, 215, Sr.)
LT	Gabe Brandner (6-6, 285, Jr.)
LG	Sterling Korona (6-7, 290, Jr.)
C	Austin Davis (6-4, 290, Jr.)
RG	Tanner Stone (6-6, 300, Sr.)
RT	Casey Blaser (6-5, 290, Sr.)
TE	Erich Schneider (6-7, 240, Sr.)
WR	T.J. Rahming (5-10, 165, So.)
WR	Anthony Nash (6-5, 200, Sr.)
WR	Ryan Smith (5-7, 165, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Allen Jackson (6-5, 260, Sr.)
DT	Mike Ramsay (6-2, 295, Jr.)
DT	A.J. Wolf (6-4, 270, Sr.)
DE	Marquies Price (6-6, 240, So.)
LB	Zavier Carmichael (6-0, 220, Jr.)
LB	Ben Humphreys (6-2, 210, So.)
CB	Breon Borders (6-0, 175, Sr.)
CB	DeVon Edwards (5-9, 180, Sr.)
S	Phillip Carter (6-1, 195, Jr.)
S	Deondre Singleton (5-11, 180, Sr.)
S	Corbin McCarthy (5-10, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	A.J. Reed (5-11, 175, Fr.)
P	Austin Parker (6-1, 180, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. Scott Bracy, ATH ★★★★
2. Dylan Singleton, S ★★★★
3. Mark Birmingham, TE ★★★

The Blue Devils surprised everyone and, for the first time, landed a recruiting class in the top half of the ACC. Few staffs, if any, get more out of the recruited talent on hand than coach David Cutcliffe's bunch. They've proven it in the win-loss department and now recruits, including a few of the national variety, have taken notice. This is a program that's trending up on the recruiting trail.

DUNCAN: GERRY BROOME / AP

VIRGINIA
CAVALIERS

5-YEAR RECORD
23-38

WIN **LOSS**
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB **Taquan Mizzell**

MIZZELL: STEVE HELBER / AP

One of the Power Five's least surprising coaching vacancies after the 2015 season produced one of its most unexpected hires.

Virginia parted ways with Mike London after he produced a 27-48 mark with just one bowl appearance over six seasons and brought in Brigham Young's Bronco Mendenhall less than a week later. It's a significant investment–Mendenhall will make $3.25 million in the first season of a five-year deal–but that's the price the Cavaliers needed to pay to lure a proven coach with 99 victories over the last 11 years to Charlottesville.

The geographic fit might seem a bit odd (Mendenhall has never worked east of the Mississippi River and spent just one season east of the Rockies), but he is familiar with a stringent academic environment. Yet what Virginia needs as much as anything else at the moment is a nudge to get over the hump, and limiting self-inflicted errors will be as crucial as anything.

Mendenhall identified "accountability, discipline and effort" during his introductory press conference as areas the Cavaliers must improve, and that ties in directly with an extended history of turnover troubles and penalties in recent years. Last season, Virginia had a minus-9 turnover margin and averaged 7.58 penalties per game.

While Mendenhall brought in almost an entirely new staff, the Cavaliers will enjoy a rare bit of continuity at quarterback with the return of Matt Johns. In the last 11 seasons, Virginia has used 10 different starting quarterbacks in its opener, and Johns, who threw for 20 touchdowns and 17 interceptions last year, should be more settled as a senior.

The Cavaliers also return all-purpose star Taquan Mizzell, who led the team in rushing and receptions and should be one of the ACC's most dynamic players.

The defense features two exceptional cornerstones in linebacker Micah Kiser and safety Quin Blanding. Both juniors were first-team All-ACC picks last season, with Kiser leading the league in tackles per game and Blanding second in the category.

London's recruiting chops were never in doubt, and Mendenhall does not inherit a program completely bereft of talent. His immediate task is making the Cavaliers more efficient, not just in a Coastal Division devoid of pushovers but also against a nonconference slate that includes a trip to Oregon.

All 11 of Mendenhall's BYU teams earned postseason berths. That's a reasonable goal for these Cavaliers, who earned just two bowl bids in the last 10 years but were largely competitive (if not successful) in London's final two seasons.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Matt Johns (6-5, 210, Sr.)
RB	Taquan Mizzell (5-10, 195, Sr.)
LT	Jack English (6-5, 300, Jr.)
LG	Sean Karl (6-6, 310, Sr.)
C	Jackson Matteo (6-5, 290, Sr.)
RG	Jack McDonald (6-5, 290, Jr.)
RT	Eric Smith (6-5, 300, Sr.)
TE	Evan Butts (6-4, 240, So.)
WR	Andre Levrone (6-3, 215, Jr.)
WR	Doni Dowling (6-1, 215, Jr.)
WR	Olamide Zaccheaus (5-8, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Andrew Brown (6-4, 280, Jr.)
DE	Donte Wilkins (6-1, 290, Sr.)
DE	Eli Hanback (6-4, 280, Fr.)
LB	Zach Bradshaw (6-3, 235, Sr.)
LB	Micah Kiser (6-2, 240, Jr.)
LB	C.J. Stalker (6-2, 225, So.)
LB	Chris Peace (6-1, 240, So.)
CB	Tim Harris (6-2, 200, Sr.)
CB	Juan Thornhill (6-1, 200, So.)
S	Quin Blanding (6-2, 205, Jr.)
S	Kelvin Rainey (6-1, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Dylan Sims (6-0, 190, Sr.)
P	Nicholas Conte (6-3, 225, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Tre Harbison,** RB ★★★
2. **Joseph Reed,** WR ★★★
3. **Hasise Dubois,** WR ★★★

Coach Bronco Mendenhall's new staff scrambled trying to make relationships over a small period of time, moving across the country from BYU after taking over in December. They went up and down the East Coast to sign this group, a collection highlighted by a big back in Tre Harbison, size at offensive tackle, the potential quarterback of the future and a solid group of cornerbacks.

7

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Richmond	
S.10	@OREGON	
S.17	@CONNECTICUT	
S.24	Central Michigan	
O.1	@DUKE	42-34
O.15	Pittsburgh	19-26
O.22	North Carolina	13-26
O.29	Louisville	31-38
N.5	@WAKE FOREST	
N.12	Miami (Fla.)	21-27
N.19	@GEORGIA TECH	27-21
N.26	@VIRGINIA TECH	20-23

COACH

Bronco Mendenhall
First year
CAREER RECORD: 99-43

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Robert Anae (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Nick Howell (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Scott Stadium (61,500)
TICKETS: 800-542-UVA1
SITE: Charlottesville, Va.
WEBSITE: virginiasports.com
TWITTER: @UVa_Football

B1G

PROJECTED FINISH

EAST DIVISION

1. **Ohio State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: CFP Semifinals (Peach Bowl)
2. **Michigan**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Rose Bowl
3. **Michigan State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Outback Bowl
4. **Penn State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: TaxSlayer Bowl
5. **Indiana**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Heart of Dallas Bowl
6. **Maryland**
7. **Rutgers**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Iowa**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Citrus Bowl
2. **Wisconsin**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Holiday Bowl
3. **Nebraska**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Pinstripe Bowl
4. **Northwestern**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Foster Farms Bowl
5. **Minnesota**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Quick Lane Bowl
6. **Illinois**
7. **Purdue**

Saquon Barkley, RB, Penn State

J.T. Barrett (16) and Ohio State figure to slug it out with Michigan and Michigan State for Big Ten supremacy.

All roads to B1G title lead through Columbus, Ann Arbor, East Lansing

BY BILL BENDER
Sporting News college football writer

The Big Ten didn't take a big step forward last season, but the conference didn't take a big step back either.

Michigan State, Iowa and Ohio State all finished in the Top 10 in the final College Football Rankings and ended up in the New Year's Six. The Spartans and Hawkeyes were routed in those bowl games, but the Buckeyes saved face with a win agianst Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl. Michigan followed with a big win against Florida in the Citrus Bowl.

The Big Ten finished with six 10-win teams and a 5-5 record in the postseason. Again, not a a big step forward, but not a big step back.

The Big Ten East power struggle among Ohio State, Michigan and Michigan State continues to be the dominant story in the conference. Ohio State must replace nine starters who left early for the NFL Draft, but coach Urban Meyer still has J.T. Barrett. Michigan enters Jim Harbaugh's second year as coach after a 10-win season in 2015. Michigan State won't get as many headlines, but the Spartans and Mark Dantonio aren't going away.

Penn State enters a crucial third year under James Franklin. Indiana is building off its first bowl appearance under Kevin Wilson. Rutgers and Maryland, still feeling their way in the Big Ten, welcome first-year coaches in Chris Ash and D.J. Durkin from Ohio State and Michigan, respectively.

The Big Ten West remains wide open. Iowa returns several key pieces from last year's team heading into Kirk Ferentz's 18th season as head coach of the Hawkeyes. Wisconsin won 10 games in Paul Chryst's first year, while Nebraska will look to bounce back after a disappointing first season under Mike Riley. Northwestern also won 10 games. Minnesota will look to rebound in Tracy Claeys first full season, and Purdue's Darrell Hazell has a must-win season coming up.

The addition of longtime NFL coordinator and head coach Lovie Smith as the new man in charge at Illinois is intriguing.

The Big Ten brings a lot of exciting storylines into 2016, and most of those revolve around the Buckeyes, Spartans and Wolverines. However, don't rule out a surprise champion from the Big Ten West.

OSU, MICHIGAN: CARLOS OSORIO / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Three-for-all:** The Big Ten East Division power struggle among Ohio State, Michigan and Michigan State was fantastic in 2015. All three teams are capable of winning the division in 2016.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Ohio State	25	1	17	7	289.16
2	Michigan	29	1	14	14	283.21
3	Michigan State	20	0	10	10	239.37
4	Penn State	20	1	7	11	237.81
5	Nebraska	21	0	5	16	218.51
6	Wisconsin	26	0	3	22	204.97
7	Maryland	21	0	3	17	189.12
8	Iowa	25	0	0	25	181.63
9	Minnesota	20	0	1	19	180.62
10	Northwestern	20	0	0	20	174.71
11	Indiana	21	0	0	20	169.77
12	Illinois	25	0	0	19	153.58
13	Rutgers	18	0	0	13	151.22
14	Purdue	23	0	0	17	148.94

ALL-BIG TEN

OFFENSE

QB **J.T. Barrett,** Jr., Ohio State
RB **Justin Jackson,** Jr., Northwestern
RB **Saquon Barkley,** So., Penn State
OL **Dan Voltz,** Sr., Wisconsin
OL **Erik Magnuson,** Sr., Michigan
OL **Pat Elflein,** Sr., Ohio State
OL **Dan Feeney,** Sr., Indiana
OL **Brian Allen,** Jr., Michigan State
TE **Jake Butt,** Sr., Michigan
WR **Chris Godwin,** Jr., Penn State
WR **Jordan Westerkamp,** Sr., Nebraska

DEFENSE

DL **Tyquan Lewis,** Jr., Ohio State
DL **Chris Wormley,** Sr., Michigan
DL **Malik McDowell,** Jr., Michigan State
DL **Ryan Glasgow,** Sr., Michigan
LB **Raekwon McMillan,** Jr., Ohio State
LB **Anthony Walker,** Jr., Northwestern
LB **Ed Davis,** Sr., Michigan State
DB **Desmond King,** Sr., Iowa
DB **Jourdan Lewis,** Sr., Michigan
DB **Montae Nicholson,** Jr., Michigan State
DB **Nate Gerry,** Sr., Nebraska

SPECIALISTS

K **Griffin Oakes,** Jr., Indiana
P **Cameron Johnston,** Sr., Ohio State

HARBAUGH: TONY DING / AP

↗ NEWSMAKER

When **Jim Harbaugh** travels, everybody follows. When Harbaugh tweets, everybody retweets. Michigan's impressive makeover last season came with some fantastic finishes for better (Minnesota) and worse (Michigan State), and the rematch with Ohio State in Columbus should be interesting given last year's blowout loss. Can Harbaugh lead Michigan to its first Big Ten championship since 2004?

↘ OVERRATED

PENN STATE

▸ Back-to-back 7-6 seasons—including a 6-10 record in Big Ten play—puts a little pressure on James Franklin in his third year. Penn State is free of NCAA sanctions and has recruited well. The Nittany Lions, however, have to fight back into the top three in the Big Ten East.

↘ UNDERRATED

WISCONSIN

▸ The Badgers quietly won 10 games last season in Paul Chryst's first year as head coach and still have a roster that is capable of reclaiming the Big Ten West. But this year's schedule is brutal with crossover games against Ohio State, Michigan and Michigan State.

2 It's Iowa: The Hawkeyes impressed with an undefeated regular season en route to the Big Ten West title last season. Several key pieces return. Can Kirk Ferentz do it again?

3 Lovie time: Illinois made a splash by hiring former Chicago Bears head coach Lovie Smith in the spring. Can the Illini make some noise in the Big Ten West right away?

RATING THE BIG TEN

↘ FASTEST RECEIVER
Dontre Wilson, Ohio State
Wilson doubles as a sprinter for the OSU track team and averages 24.4 yards per kick return for his career.

↘ BEST HANDS
Jordan Westerkamp, WR, Nebraska
Westerkamp can make the circus catch and the routine grab. The next step is a 1,000-yard season.

↘ BEST PASSING QB
C.J. Beathard, QB, Iowa
Beathard's passing efficiency (61.6 completion percentage rate) helped Iowa win the Big Ten West last year.

↘ BEST RUNNING QB
J.T. Barrett, Ohio State
Barrett led Big Ten quarterbacks in rushing yards last season, and he didn't even start in eight games.

↘ MOST ELUSIVE RB
Justin Jackson, Northwestern
Jackson rushed for 1,000-plus yards each of the last two years and could break the Wildcats' all-time rushing record.

↘ BEST ATHLETE
Jabrill Peppers, S/LB, Michigan
Peppers can play safety, linebacker, cornerback, running back, receiver, Wildcat quarterback and returner. He's the most versatile athlete in college football.

↘ BEST UNDER PRESSURE
J.T. Barrett, QB, Ohio State
Barrett's feet allow him to escape pressure with ease. He took just six sacks last season.

↘ TOP NFL PROSPECT
Malik McDowell, DT, Michigan State
The anchor of the Spartans' defensive line is unblockable at times. He should challenge to be the No. 1 NFL pick in 2017.

↘ TOP FRESHMAN
Rashan Gary, DT, Michigan
Gary, the top player in the 2016 recruiting class, should work into Michigan's rotation right away. He's that good.

↘ TOP TRANSFER
John O'Korn, QB, Michigan
O'Korn will battle Wilton Speight and Shane Morris for the starting job. The former University of Houston quarterback put up numbers in a starting role before.

↘ HARDEST HITTER
Raekwon McMillan, LB, Ohio State
McMillan's aggressive style will lead to more big hits and a future in the first round of the NFL Draft.

↘ BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Anthony Walker, LB, Northwestern
The former three-star recruit has emerged as one of the best linebackers in the nation.

↘ BEST INTERVIEW
Jim Harbaugh, head coach, Michigan
He might say something. He might say nothing. He might not even show up. No matter what, it's always must-see TV.

↘ BEST COACH
Urban Meyer, Ohio State
He's 50-4 since arriving in Columbus, and has three national championships for his career. Enough said.

↘ COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Justin Wilcox, Wisconsin
Michigan's Don Brown also takes over an elite defense, but Wilcox faces more pressure to keep UW defense strong.

↘ HOTTEST SEAT
Darrell Hazell, head coach, Purdue
Hazell is 2-22 in Big Ten play the last three seasons. Purdue can't afford to be patient forever.

↘ LOUDEST STADIUM
Ohio Stadium
The Buckeyes are 27-2 at home since Urban Meyer's arrival.

↘ TOP SCHOLAR
Brandon Lingen, TE, Minnesota
The second-team Academic All-American boasts a 3.85 GPA and is majoring in engineering.

OHIO STATE
BUCKEYES

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

4
SportingNews 2016 NATIONAL RANK

Raekwon McMillan

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Bowling Green	
S.10	Tulsa	
S.17	@OKLAHOMA	
O.1	Rutgers	49-7
O.8	Indiana	34-27
O.15	@WISCONSIN	
O.22	@PENN STATE	38-10
O.29	Northwestern	
N.5	Nebraska	
N.12	@MARYLAND	49-28
N.19	@MICHIGAN STATE	14-17
N.26	Michigan	42-13

COACH

Urban Meyer
Fifth year (50-4)
CAREER RECORD: 154-27
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Ed Warinner (fifth year)
Tim Beck (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Greg Schiano (first year)
Luke Fickell (12th year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 12-1
(Beat Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl, 44-28)
STADIUM: Ohio Stadium (104,944)
TICKETS: 614-292-2624
SITE: Columbus, Ohio
WEBSITE: ohiostatebuckeyes.com
TWITTER: @OhioStAthletics

Ohio State is one of the few places where a 12-1 season that includes wins against Michigan and Notre Dame doesn't feel like enough. That's the national championship-or-else standard Urban Meyer has created in Columbus.

The Buckeyes are 50-4 since Meyer took over in 2012, and they've won at least 12 games in each of those seasons. That includes just one loss in Big Ten regular-season conference games.

For the second straight year, Meyer is replacing one of his coordinators. This time, defensive boss Chris Ash left to take the head-coaching job at Rutgers. Meyer brought in former Tampa Bay Buccaneers (and, ironically, Rutgers) head coach Greg Schiano to run the defense. Schiano takes over a unit that ranked second in the FBS in scoring defense (15.1 points per game) and ninth in total defense (311.3 yards per game) last season.

This year will be a challenge for Meyer. Nine Ohio State players left early for the NFL Draft, and the Buckeyes are replacing 16 starters from last year's team.

The good news is quarterback J.T. Barrett isn't one of those regulars. He took over for Cardale Jones late last season and led the Buckeyes to those wins against the Wolverines and Fighting Irish to close the season. Barrett is an efficient dual-threat quarterback who has totaled 45 passing touchdowns and 22 rushing scores the last two seasons. He could contend for the Heisman Trophy in this offense.

The bigger concern in the backfield is replacing Ezekiel Elliott, who rushed for 3,699 yards and 41 scores over the last two seasons. Bri'onte Dunn and Curtis Samuel are among those fighting for lead-back duties, and Samuel also could double as a receiver. Redshirt freshman Mike Weber and early-enrollee freshman Antonio Williams will also fight for carries.

Samuel is the only returning player who had more than 20 catches last season. Ohio

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

LB **Raekwon McMillan**

A first-team All-Big Ten choice as a sophomore last year, McMillan led the Buckeyes in tackles (119), which was fourth best in the conference. His 62 assists were a testament to his all-over-the-field style of play in which he is seemingly in on every tackle. The 6-2, 240-pound middle linebacker was named one of three Ohio State captains in the spring by coach Urban Meyer. He finished third in the Butkus Award voting last year and was a second-team Walter Camp All-American.

MCMILLAN: DARRON CUMMINGS / AP

State lost Michael Thomas, Jalin Marshall and Braxton Miller. Among those receivers looking to step up are Noah Brown, who returns after missing last season with a leg injury, and Parris Campbell, who saw limited action last season. Early enrollee Austin Mack is a special talent who could play right away.

On the offensive line, Pat Elflein elected to return to school, and he'll move to center this season. Billy Price returns at guard for a unit that must replace three starters.

Ohio State averaged 35.7 points per game last season, the lowest total of the Meyer Era. That's also part of the high standards in Columbus.

Linebacker and team captain Raekwon McMillan is the building block for Schiano's defense. He's the only returning starter at linebacker, but Dante Booker and Chris Worley appear ready to step into starting roles beside him.

The defensive line must replace Joey Bosa and Adolphus Washington, but bookends Tyquan Lewis and Sam Hubbard combined for 14.5 sacks last season. End Jonathon Cooper is another freshman who could step in and play right away. The interior rotation should feature Michael Hill, Donovan Munger, Dre'Mont Jones and Malik Barrow. Bosa's younger brother Nick also arrives as a freshman in the fall. The biggest challenge will be replacing three starters in the secondary.

Ohio State has the best record in the FBS over the last four seasons. To put that in perspective, Alabama is 50-6. Those are the two schools that are the best bet to compete for a national championship every year. Despite the heavy losses on both sides of the ball, the Buckeyes can expect to be in that hunt again.

A big early-season test comes on Sept. 17 at Oklahoma, a game that should have the feel of a College Football Playoff semifinal. Both teams should be ranked in the top 10 for that game.

The Big Ten schedule features crossover games at Wisconsin and at home against Nebraska, but the season rests on the last two weeks of the campaign. Ohio State travels to Michigan State, the only Big Ten team that has defeated Meyer since his arrival. The season finale against Michigan is at home, where the Buckeyes haven't lost to the Wolverines since 2000. The rivalry between Meyer and Jim Harbaugh will continue to be a dominant storyline in the Big Ten, but the Buckeyes have done their part in that rivalry. That's why they are the slight favorite to bring home the Big Ten championship.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

It was more of the same for the Buckeyes as they signed the country's No. 4 class per 247Sports (No. 1 in the Big Ten). Urban Meyer and company signed arguably the country's best quarterback, Dwayne Haskins, and are in the discussion for the best collection of skill talent led by receivers Austin Mack and Binjimen Victor and running back DeMario McCall. Flip over to defense and five-star tackle Nick Bosa and four-star end Jonathon Cooper are among the best at their position, while Jordan Fuller leads the way in the secondary. Of the 25 who signed, 18 rank as four-star prospects or better, including all seven freshmen who enrolled early.

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAFF RATING)

1. **Nick Bosa,** DT ★★★★★
2. **Jonathon Cooper,** DE ★★★★
3. **DeMario McCall,** RB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

J.T. Barrett

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
11	139.2	93-147-4	63.3	992	11	90.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
J.T. Barrett	11	115	682	5.9	11	62.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Curtis Samuel	13	22	289	13.1	2	22.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Raekwon McMillan	13	57	62	119

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Tyquan Lewis	13	8.0	47

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Gareon Conley	2	0	0.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

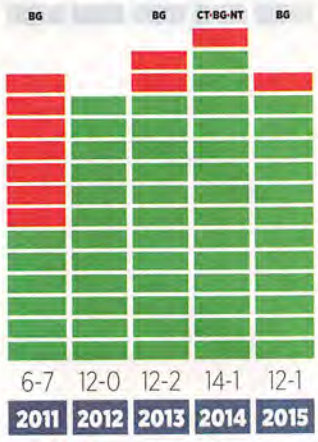
Located outside the southwest corner of Ohio Stadium is the Buckeye Grove. Since 1934, a Buckeye tree has been planted in honor of each Ohio State All-American. Trees are usually planted in a pregame ceremony prior to the spring game every year, and each tree is designated with a plaque honoring each player. To date, there are 145 trees in the Buckeye Grove.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OSU	OPP
SCORING	464	196
Points Per Game	35.7	15.1
FIRST DOWNS	280	216
Rushing	151	93
Passing	114	103
Penalty	15	20
RUSHING YARDAGE	3188	1649
Yards gained rushing	3476	2010
Yards lost rushing	288	361
Rushing Attempts	567	488
Average Per Rush	5.6	3.4
Average Per Game	245.2	126.8
TDs Rushing	39	10
PASSING YARDAGE	2455	2398
Comp-Att-Int	204-325-9	207-411-12
Average Per Pass	7.6	5.8
Average Per Catch	12.0	11.6
Average Per Game	188.8	184.5
TDs Passing	19	14
TOTAL OFFENSE	5643	4047
Total Plays	892	899
Average Per Play	6.3	4.5
Average Per Game	434.1	311.3
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	17-410	50-813
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	30-392	12-43
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-142	9-140
KICK RETURN AVG.	24.1	16.3
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.1	3.6
INT RETURN AVG.	11.8	15.6
FUMBLES-LOST	21-9	16-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	76-656	68-533
Average Per Game	50.5	41.0
PUNTS-YARDS	60-2600	92-3787
Average Per Punt	43.3	41.2
Net punt average	40.3	34.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:16	30:44
3RD-DOWN CONV.	70/172	74/212
3rd-Down Pct.	41%	35%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	11/19	9/23
4th-Down Pct.	58%	39%
SACKS BY-YARDS	38-217	19-101
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	62	24
FG-ATTEMPTS	10-15	10-17
ATTENDANCE	750705	335016
Games/Avg Per Game	7/107244	5/67003
Neutral Site Games		1/71123

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
OHIO STATE	73	135	125	131	0	464
Opponent	20	74	34	68	0	196

5-YEAR RECORD 56-11



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**J.T. Barrett** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
	Joe Burrow (6-3, 208, Fr.)
RB	**Bri'onte Dunn** (6-0, 215, Sr.)
	Mike Weber (5-10, 215, Fr.)
HB	**Curtis Samuel** (5-11, 200, Jr.)
	Dontre Wilson (5-10, 195, Sr.)
LT	**Jamarco Jones** (6-5, 310, Jr.)
	Kevin Feder (6-9, 305, Fr.)
LG	**Billy Price** (6-4, 315, Jr.)
	Evan Lisle (6-6, 305, Jr.)
C	**Pat Elflein** (6-3, 300, Sr.)
	Brady Taylor (6-5, 300, So.)
RG	**Demetrius Knox** (6-4, 305, So.)
	Matthew Burrell (6-3, 300, Fr.)
RT	**Isaiah Prince** (6-7, 305, So.)
	Branden Bowen (6-7, 320, Fr.)
TE	**Marcus Baugh** (6-5, 255, Jr.)
	Jake Hausmann (6-5, 240, Fr.)
WR	**Noah Brown** (6-2, 222, So.)
	Austin Mack (6-2, 210, Fr.)
WR	**Parris Campbell** (6-1, 205, So.)
	Torrance Gibson (6-4, 205, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Sam Hubbard** (6-5, 265, So.)
	Jalyn Holmes (6-5, 265, Jr.)
DT	**Michael Hill** (6-3, 295, Jr.)
	Malik Barrow (6-3, 287, Fr.)
DT	**Donovan Munger** (6-4, 300, Jr.)
	Dre'Mont Jones (6-3, 280, Fr.)
DE	**Tyquan Lewis** (6-4, 260, Jr.)
	Jonathon Cooper (6-3, 238, Fr.)
LB	**Dante Booker** (6-3, 233, Jr.)
	Justin Hilliard (6-1, 230, Fr.)
LB	**Raekwon McMillan** (6-2, 240, Jr.)
	Nick Conner (6-3, 230, Fr.)
LB	**Chris Worley** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
	Jerome Baker (6-1, 215, So.)
CB	**Gareon Conley** (6-0, 195, Jr.)
	Marshon Lattimore (6-0, 195, So.)
CB	**Damon Webb** (5-11, 193, Jr.)
	Denzel Ward (5-11, 180, So.)
S	**Erick Smith** (6-0, 202, Jr.)
	Jahsen Wint (5-11, 186, Fr.)
S	**Cam Burrows** (6-0, 208, Jr.)
	Malik Hooker (6-2, 205, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Sean Nuernberger** (6-1, 220, Jr.)
P	**Cameron Johnston** (5-11, 195, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

MICHIGAN
WOLVERINES

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

8
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Jehu Chesson

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Hawaii	
S.10	UCF	
S.17	Colorado	
S.24	Penn State	28-16
O.1	Wisconsin	
O.8	@RUTGERS	49-16
O.22	Illinois	
O.29	@MICHIGAN STATE	23-27
N.5	Maryland	28-0
N.12	@IOWA	
N.19	Indiana	48-41
N.26	@OHIO STATE	13-42

COACH

Jim Harbaugh
Second year (10-3)
CAREER RECORD: 68-30

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tim Drevno (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Don Brown (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Florida in the Citrus Bowl, 41-7)
STADIUM: Michigan Stadium (107,601)
TICKETS: 866-296-MTIX
SITE: Ann Arbor, Mich.
WEBSITE: mgoblue.com
TWITTER: @umichfootball

It didn't take long for Jim Harbaugh to revive Michigan football. Harbaugh guided the Wolverines to a 10-3 record in his first season and built on that with a top-five recruiting class highlighted by the nation's top player in defensive tackle Rashan Gary.

It's not that Harbaugh is doing it. It's the way he's doing it. Satellite camps and spring practice in Florida are just a few of the outside-the-box ideas he's executed in making Michigan a trendy program. He has also gone on the offensive with tweets directed at rival coaches and athletic directors. Harbaugh has a presence both on and off the field that is hard to match.

From a coaching standpoint, Michigan lost defensive coordinator D.J. Durkin, who took the head-coaching job at Maryland. Harbaugh replaced Durkin with Don Brown, who helped Boston College rank first in the nation in total defense (254.3 yards per game) last season.

The Wolverines should continue to rely on a strong defense that revolves around All-America candidates Jabrill Peppers and Jourdan Lewis.

Peppers moved to linebacker in spring practice to help ease the loss of all three starters there from last season, but he could also see time at cornerback and safety. He's the most versatile player in college football. Peppers didn't play offense in spring practice, but he saw time at receiver, running back and quarterback in the Wildcat last season. He'll be the focal point of the defense and a role player in the offense.

Lewis is a first-round NFL talent at cornerback who gives Michigan a lockdown defender on the perimeter. His decision to stay in school and not enter the draft was a huge lift for the secondary and will give Brown more freedom in blitz packages.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

WR **Jehu Chesson**

Returning as a graduate student this year after a stellar 2015 campaign, Chesson was named the team's MVP after leading the Wolverines in touchdowns with 12 (9 receiving, 2 rushing, 1 return). Chesson also set career highs in receptions (50) and receiving yards (764) while averaging 15.3 yards a catch. The breakout season earned him first-team All-Big Ten honors and a likely spot as a captain for 2016. In the season-ending 41-7 win over Florida in the Citrus Bowl, the 6-3, 200-pound St. Louis product caught five passes for 118 yards and a touchdown against Gators cornerback and expected future first-round NFL pick Vernon Hargreaves III.

CHESSON: GENE J. PUSKAR / AP

Ben Gedeon and Mike McCray are veterans being counted on to step up at linebacker, and true freshmen Devin Bush and Carlo Kemp could see time there. There's more depth on the defensive line, which features Chris Wormley, Ryan Glasgow, Taco Charlton and Maurice Hurst. Gary will also see time right away.

Michigan's biggest offensive question is at quarterback again. Jake Rudock progressed nicely under Harbaugh last season, but he has graduated. Junior Wilton Speight appeared to take the lead to replace him in the spring, but he'll be challenged by seniors John O'Korn and Shane Morris in fall camp. Speight engineered a comeback win against Minnesota last season. O'Korn sat out after transferring from the University of Houston and figures to be the closest competition. Morris took reps at both quarterback and receiver in the spring game.

De'Veon Smith returns at running back, but Ty Isaac, Drake Johnson and true freshman Kareem Walker will be in the mix for carries. Smith rushed for 753 yards and 4.2 yards per carry last season, the second-best rushing total for a Michigan running back since the 2008 season. Smith is a serviceable lead back, and he could flirt with 1,000 yards given enough carries.

The Wolverines return their top wide receivers in Amara Darboh and Jehu Chesson, and Jake Butt bypassed the NFL Draft so he can play tight end again for the Wolverines. Tyrone Wheatley and Ian Bunting are good options in the passing game behind Butt. The offensive line also returns mostly intact. Mason Cole, Erik Magnuson and Kyle Kalis anchor that unit.

Harbaugh's impact is implicit, and the enthusiasm he's created in Ann Arbor is off the charts. Now it's time for Michigan to go out and beat its two main rivals. Michigan State beat Michigan in miraculous fashion last season, and Ohio State routed the Wolverines in the regular-season finale.

Michigan is 2-14 against those two teams since former coach Lloyd Carr retired, and it travels to East Lansing and Columbus this season. That's the circled part of the schedule, but it's not the only tough stretch. The Wolverines' nonconference schedule features Hawaii, UCF and Colorado and the Big Ten slate opens with back-to-back games against Penn State and Wisconsin. Michigan won't leave the Big House until Oct. 8. A road trip to Iowa on Nov. 12 is another landmine.

The Wolverines are a Big Ten and College Football Playoff contender again, but they'll need to clear those two huge roadblocks in order to win their first Big Ten title since 2004.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The nation's No. 1 recruit in five-star Rashan Gary highlights Jim Harbaugh's first full recruiting class that went as expected as the Wolverines finished No. 5 in the 247Sports rankings and No. 2 in the Big Ten. Gary adds the pass-rushing element Michigan needs in 2016 to be a title contender. In all, Harbaugh and company signed 28, including quarterback Brandon Peters, who looks like a future star, and two of the nation's best cornerbacks in David Long and Lavert Hill. Several playmakers coming on offense including Chris Evans, Dylan Crawford and Nate Johnson.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 **Rashan Gary,** DT ★★★★★
2 **Ben Bredeson,** OL ★★★★
3 **Brandon Peters,** QB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Wilton Speight	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	7	65.7	9-25-1	36.0	73	1	10.4

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
De'Veon Smith	13	180	753	4.2	6	57.9

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jake Butt	13	51	654	12.8	3	50.3

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jourdan Lewis	13	37	15	52

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Taco Charlton	13	5.5	38

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jourdan Lewis	2	46	23.0	1
Channing Stribling	2	31	15.5	0

TEAM TRADITION

Throughout games across the country, public address announcers tend to update scores from around the country. At Michigan, this usually includes Top 25 and Big Ten games. But it also includes one team that may seem out of place: Slippery Rock. The tradition began in 1959 and it has been a part of the Maize-and-Blue ever since. Fans react to the score jubilant cheers or a chorus of boos depending on The Rock's fate.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MICH	OPP
SCORING	408	213
Points Per Game	31.4	16.4
FIRST DOWNS	265	217
Rushing	96	91
Passing	149	95
Penalty	20	31
RUSHING YARDAGE	2057	1589
Yards gained rushing	2260	2029
Yards lost rushing	203	440
Rushing Attempts	491	437
Average Per Rush	4.2	3.6
Average Per Game	158.2	122.2
TDs Rushing	27	12
PASSING YARDAGE	3090	2060
Comp-Att-Int	258-415-10	181-381-10
Average Per Pass	7.4	5.4
Average Per Catch	12.0	11.4
Average Per Game	237.7	158.5
TDs Passing	21	8
TOTAL OFFENSE	5147	3649
Total Plays	906	818
Average Per Play	5.7	4.5
Average Per Game	395.9	280.7
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	28-795	41-840
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	18-205	15-172
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	10-97	10-125
KICK RETURN AVG.	28.4	20.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	11.4	11.5
INT RETURN AVG.	9.7	12.5
FUMBLES-LOST	16-6	11-2
PENALTIES-YARDS	87-778	74-668
Average Per Game	59.8	51.4
PUNTS-YARDS	55-2245	82-3231
Average Per Punt	40.8	39.4
Net punt average	35.9	34.5
TIME OF POSS./GAME	33:28	26:32
3RD-DOWN CONV.	86/186	50/181
3rd-Down Pct.	46%	28%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	6/16	9/24
4th-Down Pct.	38%	38%
SACKS BY-YARDS	32-250	18-95
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	50	24
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-22	15-18
ATTENDANCE	771174	307311
Games/Avg Per Game	7/110168	5/61462
Neutral Site Games		1/63113

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
MICHIGAN	80	150	77	87	14	408
Opponent	39	64	45	58	7	213

5-YEAR RECORD 41-23

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Wilton Speight** (6-6, 239, Jr.)
	John O'Korn (6-4, 209, Sr.)
FB	**Henry Poggi** (6-4, 266, Sr.)
	Khalid Hill (6-2, 263, Sr.)
RB	**De'Veon Smith** (5-11, 228, Sr.)
	Kareem Walker (6-1, 210, Fr.)
LT	**Erik Magnuson** (6-6, 305, Sr.)
	Nolan Ulizio (6-5, 291, So.)
LG	**Kyle Kalis** (6-5, 305, Sr.)
	David Dawson (6-4, 316, Sr.)
C	**Mason Cole** (6-5, 305, Jr.)
	Patrick Kugler (6-5, 302, Sr.)
RG	**Ben Braden** (6-6, 322, Sr.)
	Ben Bredeson (6-5, 293, Fr.)
RT	**Grant Newsome** (6-7, 300, So.)
	Juwann Bushell-Beatty (6-5, 325, Jr.)
TE	**Jake Butt** (6-6, 250, Sr.)
	Tyrone Wheatley (6-6, 280, So.)
WR	**Jehu Chesson** (6-3, 200, Sr.)
	Maurice Ways (6-3, 210, Jr.)
WR	**Amara Darboh** (6-2, 215, Sr.)
	Ahmir Mitchell (6-3, 205, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Chris Wormley** (6-5, 303, Sr.)
	Taco Charlton (6-6, 285, Sr.)
DT	**Ryan Glasgow** (6-4, 300, Sr.)
	Bryan Mone (6-4, 320, Jr.)
DT	**Maurice Hurst** (6-2, 282, Sr.)
	Rashan Gary (6-5, 293, Fr.)
DE	**Lawrence Marshall** (6-4, 250, Jr.)
	Chase Winovich (6-3, 245, Jr.)
LB	**Jabrill Peppers** (6-1, 208, Jr.)
	Devin Bush (6-0, 220, Fr.)
LB	**Ben Gedeon** (6-3, 248, Sr.)
	Noah Furbush (6-4, 242, Jr.)
LB	**Mike McCray** (6-4, 240, Sr.)
	Carlo Kemp (6-3, 250, Fr.)
CB	**Jourdan Lewis** (5-10, 175, Sr.)
	Channing Stribling (6-2, 181, Sr.)
CB	**Jeremy Clark** (6-4, 210, Sr.)
	Brandon Watson (5-11, 191, Jr.)
S	**Dymonte Thomas** (6-2, 195, Sr.)
	Tyree Kinnel (5-11, 201, So.)
S	**Delano Hill** (6-0, 212, Sr.)
	Louis Grodman (5-10, 186, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Kenny Allen** (6-3, 210, Sr.)
P	**Kenny Allen** (6-3, 210, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

MICHIGAN STATE
SPARTANS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Riley Bullough

11
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Furman	
S.17	@NOTRE DAME	
S.24	Wisconsin	
O.1	@INDIANA	52-26
O.8	BYU	
O.15	Northwestern	
O.22	@MARYLAND	24-7
O.29	Michigan	27-23
N.5	@ILLINOIS	
N.12	Rutgers	31-24
N.19	Ohio State	17-14
N.26	@PENN STATE	55-16

COACH

Mark Dantonio
10th year (87-33)
CAREER RECORD: 105-50
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Jim Bollman (fourth year)
Dave Warner (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Harlon Barnett (second year)
Mike Tressel (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 12-2
(Lost to Alabama in the Cotton Bowl, 38-0)
STADIUM: Spartan Stadium (75,005)
TICKETS: 800-GO-STATE
SITE: East Lansing, Mich.
WEBSITE: msuspartans.com
TWITTER: @MSU_Football

Michigan State is coming off arguably the most memorable season in school history. The Spartans pulled off amazing road wins at Michigan and Ohio State en route to winning the Big Ten East. The Spartans won their second Big Ten championship with the help of a 22-play, fourth-quarter drive against Iowa.

That gave MSU a berth in the College Football Playoff, and the run ended with a 38-0 loss to Alabama in the Cotton Bowl. Don't expect this program to stay on the mat after that reality check. Coach Mark Dantonio simply won't let that happen.

Dantonio has built a perennial contender by stressing continuity and developing talent within the program. Michigan State may be the most underappreciated program in the country. Consider that it is one of six Power Five schools with a winning percentage of .800 or better since 2010. Alabama, Oregon, Ohio State, Florida State and Stanford are the others.

The Spartans also welcomed one of their best recruiting classes under Dantonio. Michigan State will be in the mix with Ohio State and Michigan for the Big Ten East championship again.

Michigan State averaged 29.8 points per game on offense last season. Co-offensive coordinators Dave Warner and Jim Bollman have found their rhythm together, and the Spartans won't change their scheme much this season.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

LB **Riley Bullough**

Bullough finished 2015 as a second-team All-Big Ten selection after leading the Spartans in tackles (106), becoming the first to record 100 tackles in a season since his brother Max had 111 in 2012. This marked the seventh season a member of the Bullough family has led the Spartans in tackles (father Shane 1985-1986; uncle Chuck 1990-1991; brother Max 2011-2012) The 6-2, 230-pound senior also ranked fourth in sacks (4.0) and tackles for loss (7.5). His younger brother, Byron, is listed as a sophomore linebacker and the Bullough legend should continue to grow in a big way this year.

Of course, Michigan State will have to find the right starting quarterback to keep that moving in the right direction. Connor Cook leaves after compiling a 34-5 record as Michigan State's starter. Tyler O'Connor and Damion Terry split reps in the win at Ohio State last year, and that figures to be where the competition starts in fall camp. Brian Lewerke and incoming freshman Messiah deWeaver might get a shot if O'Connor and Terry struggle early in the season.

BULLOUGH: ZACH BOLINGER / ICON SPORTSWIRE

The Spartans rolled with a committee approach at running back last season. LJ Scott, Gerald Holmes and Madre London all had more than 100 carries in 2015. Scott could take command after compiling 699 yards and 11 touchdowns as a freshman. He's a physical runner who fits Michigan State's offense.

The Spartans lost their top two pass catchers from 2015. R.J. Shelton is the top returning receiver, and tight end Josiah Price caught six touchdowns last season. They will be the primary targets while younger wideouts such as Felton Davis III and Darrell Stewart Jr. take on bigger roles in the offense. Brian Allen and Kodi Kieler anchor an experienced offensive line that loses center Jack Allen and tackle Jack Conklin.

The defense lost three starters on the line, but it can rebuild around tackle Malik McDowell. He has the potential to be the No. 1 pick in the NFL Draft with a big season. Damon Knox also returns on the defensive interior, so it's about finding a pass-rushing presence at end. Robert Bowers and Demetrius Cooper are contenders, but keep an eye on freshman Raequan Williams. Dantonio has recruited well on the defensive line.

Ed Davis was granted a sixth season of eligibility after missing last season, and his presence should solidify a linebacking group that includes Jon Reschke and Riley Bullough. Michigan State's secondary struggled with injuries last year, but sophomore Vayante Copeland is expected back to lead things there after suffering a fractured vertebrae in 2015. Darian Hicks, Demetrious Cox and Montae Nicholson round out an excellent secondary. The Spartans have the best back seven in the Big Ten.

The Spartans will start the season ranked behind Ohio State and Michigan, and it's almost as if Dantonio prefers it that way. Finding the right quarterback is essential because the Spartans travel to Notre Dame and welcome Wisconsin in September showdowns that won't be easy.

Back-to-back October games against BYU and Northwestern precede the rivalry game with Michigan on Oct. 29. Dantonio is 7-2 against the Wolverines. Michigan State closes with Ohio State at home and Penn State on the road.

Michigan State is a proven contender in the Big Ten, and that's not going to change with Dantonio on the sideline. It wouldn't be a surprise if this team found its way back to Indianapolis for the league title game, even if the road is a little bit tougher in 2016.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Nobody recruited the Midwest better in the 2016 cycle than the Spartans, who landed big-timers from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Illinois en route to the country's No. 18 class per 247Sports, No. 3 in the Big Ten. Receiver was the big need and Michigan State is bringing in four four-star prospects at the position, including U.S. Army All-American Donnie Corley. The Spartans also signed one of the country's top defensive-line classes, led by ends Josh King and Auston Robertson. This 20-player class is perhaps the best one yet of the Mark Dantonio Era. You could point to each position group and easily say that at least one who signed is a future star.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 **Josh King,** DE ★★★★
2 **Auston Robertson,** DE ★★★★
3 **Donnie Corley,** WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Tyler O'Connor

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
6	119.9	13-24-1	54.2	133	2	22.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
LJ Scott	14	146	699	4.8	11	49.9

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
R.J. Shelton	14	43	503	11.7	4	35.9

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Riley Bullough	14	48	58	106

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Demetrius Cooper	13	5.0	14

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Montae Nicholson	3	60	20.0	0
Demetrious Cox	3	14	4.7	0

TEAM TRADITION

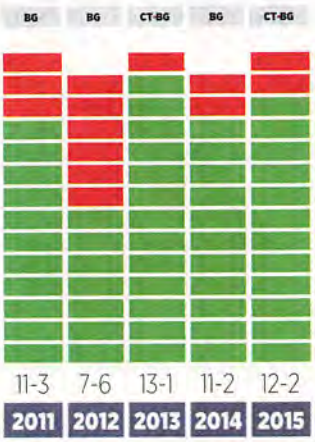
Most halftime shows consist of a performance by the marching band and, while that holds true at Michigan State, fans are also treated to a show by Zeke the Wonder Dog. A champion disc-catching yellow lab, Zeke began performing at halftime shows in 1977. He retired in 1984, and Zeke II, a black lab, revived the tradition in 2002. Zeke III, another yellow lab, took over in 2007 and continues the tradition today.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MSU	OPP
SCORING	417	304
Points Per Game	29.8	21.7
FIRST DOWNS	300	249
Rushing	115	90
Passing	164	136
Penalty	21	23
RUSHING YARDAGE	2118	1624
Yards gained rushing	2423	2002
Yards lost rushing	305	378
Rushing Attempts	552	449
Average Per Rush	3.8	3.6
Average Per Game	151.3	116.0
TDs Rushing	24	16
PASSING YARDAGE	3279	3274
Comp-Att-Int	244-440-8	270-446-15
Average Per Pass	7.5	7.3
Average Per Catch	13.4	12.1
Average Per Game	234.2	233.9
TDs Passing	26	20
TOTAL OFFENSE	5397	4898
Total Plays	992	895
Average Per Play	5.4	5.5
Average Per Game	385.5	349.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	23-488	48-1038
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-44	21-269
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-164	8-95
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.2	21.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	3.4	12.8
INT RETURN AVG.	10.9	11.9
FUMBLES-LOST	15-6	27-13
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-600	79-695
Average Per Game	42.9	49.6
PUNTS-YARDS	62-2626	64-2492
Average Per Punt	42.4	38.9
Net punt average	35.1	37.3
TIME OF POSS./GAME	32:52	27:08
3RD-DOWN CONV.	99/204	65/186
3rd-Down Pct.	49%	35%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/19	16/31
4th-Down Pct.	42%	52%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-242	21-135
MISC. YARDS	0	2
TDS SCORED	55	39
FG-ATTEMPTS	12-19	12-16
ATTENDANCE	522628	392067
Games/Avg Per Game	7/74661	5/78413
Neutral Site Games		2/74898

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
MICHIGAN STATE	95	114	93	115	0	417
Opponent	48	80	89	87	0	304

5-YEAR RECORD 54-14



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Tyler O'Connor** (6-3, 225, Sr.)
	Damion Terry (6-3, 238, Jr.)
FB	**David Fennell** (6-2, 266, Sr.)
	Collin Lucas (6-0, 232, So.)
RB	**LJ Scott** (6-0, 238, So.)
	Madre London (6-1, 220, So.)
LT	**Dennis Finley** (6-6, 282, Jr.)
	Miguel Machado (6-6, 302, Sr.)
LG	**Benny McGowan** (6-3, 327, Sr.)
	Tyler Higby (6-4, 318, Fr.)
C	**Brian Allen** (6-2, 303, Jr.)
	Devyn Salmon (6-1, 315, Jr.)
RG	**Brandon Clemons** (6-3, 303, Sr.)
	David Beedle (6-5, 310, So.)
RT	**Kodi Kieler** (6-6, 310, Sr.)
	Cole Chewins (6-7, 265, Fr.)
TE	**Josiah Price** (6-4, 260, Sr.)
	Jamal Lyles (6-3, 265, Sr.)
WR	**R.J. Shelton** (5-11, 205, Sr.)
	Monty Madaris (6-1, 202, Sr.)
WR	**Felton Davis III** (6-4, 198, So.)
	Darrell Stewart Jr. (6-1, 208, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Demetrius Cooper** (6-5, 252, Jr.)
	Raequan Williams (6-4, 307, Fr.)
NT	**Malik McDowell** (6-6, 280, Jr.)
	Gerald Owens (6-2, 298, So.)
DT	**Damon Knox** (6-5, 270, Sr.)
	Enoch Smith Jr. (6-2, 294, So.)
DE	**Robert Bowers** (6-4, 256, So.)
	Evan Jones (6-5, 246, Sr.)
LB	**Ed Davis** (6-3, 225, Sr.)
	Chris Frey (6-2, 222, Jr.)
LB	**Jon Reschke** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
	Andrew Dowell (6-0, 217, So.)
LB	**Riley Bullough** (6-2, 230, Sr.)
	Shane Jones (6-1, 230, Jr.)
CB	**Vayante Copeland** (6-0, 197, So.)
	Tyson Smith (5-10, 173, So.)
CB	**Darian Hicks** (5-10, 180, Sr.)
	Jermaine Edmondson (6-0, 182, Sr.)
FS	**Montae Nicholson** (6-2, 220, Jr.)
	Grayson Miller (6-3, 212, So.)
SS	**Demetrious Cox** (6-1, 198, Sr.)
	Khari Willis (5-11, 210, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Michael Geiger** (5-8, 183, Sr.)
P	**Jake Hartbarger** (6-4, 207, So.)

Sporting News All-American

PENN STATE
NITTANY LIONS

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Saquon Barkley

After back-to-back 7-6 campaigns, Penn State coach James Franklin and the Nittany Lions are in a show-me-something year heading into this season.

Penn State is free and clear of NCAA sanctions, has a full number of scholarships to work with and is coming off another strong showing on the recruiting trail. Franklin is charismatic and has helped steer the program through some turbulent times.

Now it's time to win some big games. Penn State is 0-5 against ranked teams the last two seasons, and the Nittany Lions are 0-6 against division rivals Ohio State, Michigan and Michigan State. That kind of play led to a 4-4 middle-of-the-road finish in the division last season.

Franklin will have to do that with two new coordinators. Former Fordham head coach Joe Moorhead replaced fired offensive coordinator John Donovan, and linebackers coach Brent Pry was moved to defensive coordinator after Bob Shoop left for the same job at Tennessee.

The offense turns to Trace McSorley at quarterback after Christian Hackenberg left for the NFL. McSorley offered a glimpse of his talent with two touchdown passes in the TaxSlayer Bowl loss to Georgia. Running back Saquon Barkley averaged 5.9 yards per carry as a freshman and is a physical freak capable of leading the Big Ten in rushing. Wideout Chris Godwin ranked second in the Big Ten with 1,101 receiving yards.

Penn State has playmakers all over, but the offensive line needs to improve. The Nittany Lions have allowed 83 sacks over the past two seasons. New offensive line coach Matt Limegrover will work to find the right combination, and it likely will revolve around guard Connor McGovern.

The defensive line must rebuild after losing impact players Carl Nassib and Anthony Zettel, and there are several young options looking to step up. Brandon Bell and Nyeem Wartman-White anchor the linebackers while safeties Marcus Allen and Malik Golden lead the secondary. Pry's familiarity with the personnel should help make the transition easier for this unit.

Penn State has a big September. After the season opener against Kent State, the Nittany Lions renew a rivalry with Pittsburgh at Heinz Field. The schools haven't met since 2000. The following week features a rematch with Temple after last year's season-opening loss.

The Nittany Lions then open Big Ten play at Michigan. The back half of the schedule features home games against Ohio State, Iowa and Michigan State. There are several chances for PSU to prove it isn't just a .500 team in the Big Ten East. This is the year for Franklin to prove it.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Kent State	
S.10	@PITTSBURGH	
S.17	Temple	10-27
S.24	@MICHIGAN	16-28
O.1	Minnesota	
O.8	Maryland	31-30
O.22	Ohio State	10-38
O.29	@PURDUE	
N.5	Iowa	
N.12	@INDIANA	29-7
N.19	@RUTGERS	28-3
N.26	Michigan State	16-55

COACH

James Franklin
Third year (14-12)
CAREER RECORD: 38-27
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joe Moorhead (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Brent Pry (third year), Tim Banks (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Georgia in the TaxSlayer Bowl, 24-17)
STADIUM: Beaver Stadium (106,572)
TICKETS: 800-NITTANY
SITE: State College, Pa.
WEBSITE: gopsusports.com
TWITTER: @PennStateFball

5-YEAR RECORD
38-25

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Trace McSorley** (6-0, 199, So.)
RB	**Saquon Barkley** (5-11, 219, So.)
LT	**Paris Palmer** (6-7, 302, Sr.)
LG	**Connor McGovern** (6-5, 306, Fr.)
C	**Ryan Bates** (6-4, 301, Fr.)
RG	**Brian Gaia** (6-3, 286, Sr.)
RT	**Andrew Nelson** (6-6, 299, Jr.)
TE	**Mike Gesicki** (6-6, 250, Jr.)
WR	**Chris Godwin** (6-1, 208, Jr.)
WR	**DaeSean Hamilton** (6-1, 214, Jr.)
WR	**Juwan Johnson** (6-4, 221, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Torrence Brown** (6-3, 257, So.)
DT	**Parker Cothren** (6-4, 302, Jr.)
DT	**Antoine White** (6-2, 283, So.)
DE	**Garrett Sickels** (6-4, 251, Jr.)
LB	**Nyeem Wartman-White** (6-1, 252, Sr.)
LB	**Brandon Bell** (6-1, 231, Sr.)
LB	**Jason Cabinda** (6-1, 237, Jr.)
CB	**Grant Haley** (5-9, 184, Jr.)
CB	**John Reid** (5-10, 188, So.)
S	**Malik Golden** (6-0, 205, Sr.)
S	**Marcus Allen** (6-2, 208, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Joey Julius** (5-10, 259, So.)
P	**Daniel Pasquariello** (6-1, 208, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES
247 STAR RATING

1 **Miles Sanders,** RB ★★★★★
2 **Michal Menet,** OG ★★★★
3 **Shane Simmons,** DE ★★★★

The Nittany Lions finished among the nation's best again under coach James Franklin, with a 20-player group that ranked 20th nationally and No. 4 in the Big Ten. Running back Miles Sanders and guard Michal Menet rank No. 1 at their respective positions, while Connor McGovern signed as the nation's No. 3 center and Shane Simmons was the country's No. 4 weakside defensive end. Eight signees were four-star prospects or better.

BARKLEY: JAY LAPRETE / AP

INDIANA
HOOSIERS

5-YEAR RECORD
20-41

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Danny Cameron** (6-1, 210, So.)
RB	**Devine Redding** (5-10, 205, Jr.)
LT	**Dimitric Camiel** (6-7, 310, Sr.)
LG	**Jacob Bailey** (6-5, 295, Sr.)
C	**Wes Rogers** (6-4, 305, Sr.)
RG	**Dan Feeney** (6-4, 310, Sr.)
RT	**Brandon Knight** (6-5, 290, So.)
TE	**Jordan Fuchs** (6-6, 230, Jr.)
WR	**Ricky Jones** (5-10, 184, Sr.)
WR	**Simmie Cobbs Jr.** (6-4, 220, Jr.)
WR	**Mitchell Paige** (5-7, 175, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Jacob Robinson** (6-4, 277, So.)
NT	**Ralph Green III** (6-5, 320, Sr.)
DT	**Robert McCray III** (6-2, 274, Jr.)
LB	**Clyde Newton** (6-1, 227, Sr.)
LB	**Marcus Oliver** (6-1, 236, Jr.)
LB	**T.J. Simmons** (6-0, 229, Sr.)
LB	**Tegray Scales** (6-0, 227, Jr.)
CB	**Rashard Fant** (5-10, 174, Jr.)
CB	**Andre Brown Jr.** (6-0, 196, So.)
S	**Jonathan Crawford** (6-2, 194, So.)
S	**Chase Dutra** (6-1, 199, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Griffin Oakes** (5-10, 200, Jr.)
P	**Joseph Gedeon** (6-3, 193, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Jonah Morris,** ATH ★★★
2 **Coy Cronk,** OT ★★★
3 **Kiante Enis,** RB ★★★

The Hoosiers' 21-player class ranked No. 55 per 247Sports and No. 11 in the Big Ten. It's led by juco quarterback Richard Lagow, who has all the tools to step right in and lead IU back to a bowl game for a second straight year. Indiana added a lot more length on defense in this class and several versatile guys, including one of Ohio's best in athlete Jonah Morris.

WR **Simmie Cobbs Jr.**

COBBS: CHUCK BURTON / AP

It took five seasons but coach Kevin Wilson finally led Indiana to a bowl game in 2015. The Hoosiers lost 44-41 to Duke in the Pinstripe Bowl, but it was a sign of progress for the program.

Where that progress takes Indiana is the next big question. The Hoosiers lost by a touchdown to Ohio State and Michigan last season, and they have an uptempo offensive system that can make anybody uncomfortable. Indiana led the Big Ten with 36.5 points per game in 2015.

The problem is the Hoosiers still can't stop anybody. Indiana ranked last in scoring defense at 37.6 points per game. As a result, the Hoosiers replaced defensive coordinator Brian Knorr with Tom Allen, who spent last season directing the defense at South Florida. The first objective is figuring out how to stop the run after allowing 195.7 rushing yards per game last season.

Indiana's top priority on offense is replacing the backfield combo of quarterback Nate Sudfeld and running back Jordan Howard. Sudfeld led the conference in passing yards and Howard ranked third in rushing. The new quarterback will be found among the trio of junior Zander Diamont, sophomore Danny Cameron and junior-college transfer Richard Lagow. Devine Redding, who ranked fifth in the Big Ten with 1,012 rushing yards, will fill Howard's shoes. Simmie Cobbs, who led the team with 1,035 receiving yards, is also back. The offensive line is led by All-America candidate Dan Feeney at guard.

Allen inherits a defense that lost all three starters on the defensive line. Leading tackler Marcus Oliver returns at linebacker and safety Jonathan Crawford leads a young secondary. He had four interceptions last season. The challenge for Allen is finding playmakers on this side of the ball.

The Hoosiers are an intriguing team that could get off to another hot start against a nonleague schedule that features Florida International, Ball State and Wake Forest.

The Big Ten schedule doesn't waste any time, however. Michigan State, Ohio State and Nebraska are the first three games in October, and a trip to Michigan comes before the season finale against archrival Purdue.

Indiana has had several close shaves against the upper half of the division, but the bottom line is the Hoosiers are 0-12 against ranked Big Ten teams under Wilson. Progress comes when Indiana can win a few games against the upper half, and that won't happen unless the defense improves. The Hoosiers are good enough to get back to a bowl game, but it remains to be seen whether they can move to the upper half of the division.

5
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	@FLORIDA INTL.	36-22
S.10	Ball State	
S.24	Wake Forest	31-24
O.1	Michigan State	26-52
O.8	@OHIO STATE	27-34
O.15	Nebraska	
O.22	@NORTHWESTERN	
O.29	Maryland	47-28
N.5	@RUTGERS	52-55
N.12	Penn State	7-29
N.19	@MICHIGAN	41-48
N.26	Purdue	54-36

COACH

Kevin Wilson
Sixth year (20-41)
CAREER RECORD: 20-41
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kevin Johns (sixth year)
Greg Frey (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Mark Hagen (first year)
Tom Allen (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Duke in the Pinstripe Bowl, 44-41)
STADIUM: Memorial Stadium (52,929)
TICKETS: 866-IUSPORTS
SITE: Bloomington, Ind.
WEBSITE: iuhoosiers.com
TWITTER: @HoosierFootball

MARYLAND
TERRAPINS

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

CB **William Likely**

Maryland's second season in the Big Ten imploded with an eight-game losing streak and 3-9 record that resulted in the midseason firing of coach Randy Edsall. The Terrapins responded by hiring Michigan defensive coordinator DJ Durkin to take his place, and it's an intriguing hire.

Durkin says he can build around the high school talent in the Mid-Atlantic region, and he'll be tasked with proving that Maryland can be a contender in a loaded Big Ten East Division. The 38-year-old Youngstown, Ohio, native brings an energetic persona to a program looking for a jump-start.

That boost needs to come on defense first. The Terrapins ranked 11th in the conference in scoring defense (34.4 points per game) and total defense (421.2 yards per game) last season. New defensive coordinator Scott Shafer resigned in the spring for personal reasons after being fired as Syracuse's head coach last November. He was replaced by Andy Buh, who was most recently special-teams coordinator at Kentucky. Another recently fired coach, former Virginia boss Mike London, will work with the defensive line as associate head coach.

That defense can build around senior cornerback William Likely, who doubles as a dynamic return man and is one of the most explosive players in the conference. Look for Durkin to get creative with Likely in certain packages. The biggest hole to fill is lineman Yannick Ngakoue, who had 13.5 sacks last year. The new staff should help the Terps make defensive improvements.

The next area that needs improvement is quarterback play. Former Arkansas State offensive coordinator Walt Bell will run the offense, and that means more uptempo play. Maryland quarterbacks combined to throw 29 interceptions last season. Seniors Perry Hills and Caleb Rowe both return at the spot, and true freshman Tyrrell Pigrome from Pinson, Ala., will get a chance to compete for the starting job. It's a wide-open competition.

Sophomore Damian Prince anchors the offensive line and could develop into an all-conference selection. Brothers Levern and Taivon Jacobs are the best bets at receiver, and senior running back Wes Brown will see more than the 71 carries he had during his junior season.

Maryland needs to show progress in its third year in the league. The nonconference schedule has back-to-back road games at Florida International and Central Florida, and the Terps could easily be 3-0 heading into Big Ten play.

Will that matter? The Terps are 0-6 against ranked Big Ten teams the last two seasons, and they've lost those games by a combined score of 221-89. A trip to Penn State on Oct. 8 will be the first big test, and a three-week stretch in November against Michigan, Ohio State and Nebraska won't be easy. Maryland could get back to a bowl game with this schedule, however.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Howard	
S.9	@FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL	
S.17	@UCF	
O.1	Purdue	
O.8	@PENN STATE	30-31
O.15	Minnesota	
O.22	Michigan State	7-24
O.29	@INDIANA	28-47
N.5	@MICHIGAN	0-28
N.12	Ohio State	28-49
N.19	@NEBRASKA	
N.26	Rutgers	46-41

COACH

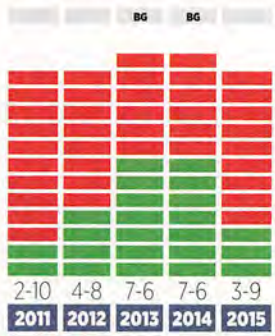
DJ Durkin
First year
CAREER RECORD: 1-0

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Walt Bell (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Andy Buh (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Maryland Stadium (51,802)
TICKETS: 800-IM-A-TERP
SITE: College Park, Md.
WEBSITE: umterps.com
TWITTER: @TerpsFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
23-39



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Perry Hills** (6-2, 210, Sr.)
RB	**Wes Brown** (6-0, 210, Sr.)
LT	**Damian Prince** (6-3, 328, So.)
LG	**JaJuan Dulaney** (6-3, 302, Jr.)
C	**Brendan Moore** (6-3, 295, So.)
RG	**Maurice Shelton** (6-3, 304, Sr.)
RT	**Michael Dunn** (6-5, 312, Sr.)
TE	**Andrew Isaacs** (6-2, 240, Jr.)
WR	**Levern Jacobs** (5-11, 188, Sr.)
WR	**Taivon Jacobs** (5-9, 165, Jr.)
WR	**D.J. Moore** (5-11, 205, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Roman Braglio** (6-2, 262, Sr.)
DT	**Azubuike Ukandu** (6-0, 307, Sr.)
DT	**Kingsley Opara** (6-3, 305, Jr.)
DE	**Cavon Walker** (6-2, 260, Jr.)
LB	**Denzel Conyers** (6-3, 212, Sr.)
LB	**Jermaine Carter Jr.** (6-0, 240, Jr.)
LB	**Jalen Brooks** (6-1, 232, Jr.)
CB	**William Likely** (5-7, 175, Sr.)
CB	**Darnell Savage Jr.** (5-10, 192, So.)
S	**Josh Woods** (6-1, 202, Jr.)
S	**Jarrett Ross** (5-9, 198, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Adam Greene** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
P	**Lee Shrader** (6-1, 215, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Terrance Davis,** OL ★★★★
2. **Tino Ellis,** WR ★★★★
3. **Richard Merritt,** OL ★★★★

DJ Durkin and the new staff only had a couple months to finish 2016 strong, and ended up with the country's No. 42 class (No. 7 in the Big Ten). The Terrapins had to get more exciting at receiver and they definitely did that with Tino Ellis and perhaps the country's top slot receiver, DJ Turner. Durkin signed three of Maryland's top 10 prospects, none bigger than Top247 offensive guard Terrance Davis.

LIKELY: PATRICK SEMANSKY / AP

RUTGERS
SCARLET KNIGHTS

WR Janarion Grant

7
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

5-YEAR RECORD
36-28

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Chris Laviano (6-2, 214, Jr.)
RB	Josh Hicks (5-10, 204, Jr.)
LT	Tariq Cole (6-6, 314, So.)
LG	Dorian Miller (6-2, 292, Jr.)
C	Derrick Nelson (6-3, 292, Sr.)
RG	Chris Muller (6-6, 319, Sr.)
RT	J.J. Denman (6-5, 308, Sr.)
TE	Nick Arcidiacono (6-4, 242, Sr.)
WR	Carlton Agudosi (6-6, 217, Sr.)
WR	Janarion Grant (5-10, 176, Sr.)
WR	Andre Patton (6-3, 205, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Quanzell Lambert (6-1, 257, Sr.)
NT	Sebastian Joseph (6-4, 295, Jr.)
DT	Darius Hamilton (6-3, 283, Sr.)
DE	Kemoko Turay (6-5, 240, Jr.)
LB	Eric Margolis (6-3, 231, So.)
LB	Deonte Roberts (6-1, 234, So.)
LB	Isaiah Johnson (6-1, 231, Sr.)
CB	Isaiah Wharton (6-1, 204, So.)
CB	Blessaun Austin (6-1, 195, So.)
S	Anthony Cioffi (6-0, 200, Sr.)
S	Kiy Hester (6-0, 202, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	David Bonagura (6-0, 242, Jr.)
P	Michael Cintron (6-3, 219, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Trey Sneed,** RB ★★★
2. **Solomon Manning,** LB ★★★
3. **Tylin Oden,** QB ★★★

New Rutgers coach Chris Ash and his staff got in late and didn't have much time to finish 2016, a class that ranked No. 75 nationally and No. 13 in the Big Ten. Quarterback Tylin Oden was a nice "get" at the end, but the Scarlet Knights are banking on and hoping that many of the overlooked prospects in New York and New Jersey they signed pan out down the road.

After a year marred by player behavior problems and an academic scandal, the Kyle Flood Era at Rutgers ended. The Scarlet Knights finished 4-8, and that included a 1-7 mark in Big Ten play. Rutgers allowed 34.9 points per game.

That's where Chris Ash comes in. Rutgers hired the former Ohio State defensive coordinator who helped mold the Buckeyes into an elite defense the past two seasons. Ash figures to follow the model he learned from Urban Meyer with the Buckeyes and bring it to a program that needs a fresh set of eyes.

That will start with changing the offense to a run-heavy spread attack, and Ash is tapping into his connections there. He hired Drew Mehringer, who served as the University of Houston's wide receivers coach under former Ohio State offensive coordinator and current Cougars head coach Tom Herman last season. It's an overhaul that will take time to develop.

Ash will watch a quarterback battle between juniors Chris Laviano and Hayden Rettig in the spring, and it's an open competition. Junior running backs Robert Martin and Josh Hicks both averaged more than 5.0 yards per carry last season and figure to get a heavy workload behind an offensive line that returns four starters. The search for a playmaker in the receiving game to replace Leonte Carroo will not come easy. Someone from among seniors Carlton Agudosi, Andre Patton and Janarion Grant needs to step up.

Ash brought in Jay Niemann from Northern Illinois as defensive coordinator to renovate a defense that allowed 462.0 yards per game last season. He'll build the unit around standout senior tackle Darius Hamilton, who returns from a knee injury that hampered him throughout last season. Hamilton had six sacks and 11.5 tackles for loss in 2014.

Rutgers needs to replace the starting linebackers from last season. Sophomore Deonte Roberts could emerge as a breakout player. The secondary features three sophomores and will need to see marked improvement.

Ash won't have an easy opener when the Scarlet Knights travel to Washington. The first three Big Ten games are against Iowa, Ohio State and Michigan. Rutgers could have a brutal start before showing improvement in the second half of the season, which features a tough road test at Michigan State.

Ash has a plan in place, and it will be interesting to see the transformation of the offense. There's also a strong recruiting base to work with in the area. Ash can make a difference, but the goal in Year One should be to get back to a bowl game.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@WASHINGTON	
S.10	Howard	
S.17	New Mexico	
S.24	Iowa	
O.1	@OHIO STATE	7-49
O.8	Michigan	16-49
O.15	Illinois	
O.22	@MINNESOTA	
N.5	Indiana	55-52
N.12	@MICHIGAN STATE	24-31
N.19	Penn State	3-28
N.26	@MARYLAND	41-46

COACH

Chris Ash
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Drew Mehringer (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Niemann (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: High Point Solutions Stadium (52,454)
TICKETS: 866-445-GORU
SITE: Piscataway, N.J.
WEBSITE: scarletknights.com
TWITTER: @RFootball

GRANT: MEL EVANS / AP

IOWA HAWKEYES

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

17
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Desmond King

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Miami (Ohio)	
S.10	Iowa State	31-17
S.17	North Dakota State	
S.24	@RUTGERS	
O.1	Northwestern	40-10
O.8	@MINNESOTA	40-35
O.15	@PURDUE	40-20
O.22	Wisconsin	10-6
N.5	@PENN STATE	
N.12	Michigan	
N.19	@ILLINOIS	29-20
N.25	Nebraska	28-20

COACH

Kirk Ferentz
18th year (127-87)
CAREER RECORD: 139-108

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Greg Davis (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Phil Parker (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 12-2
(Lost to Stanford in the Rose Bowl, 45-16)
STADIUM: Kinnick Stadium (70,585)
TICKETS: 800-IA-HAWKS
SITE: Iowa City, Iowa
WEBSITE: hawkeyesports.com
TWITTER: @HawkeyeFootball

Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said on many occasions last season that the Hawkeyes weren't doing anything differently–they were just doing things better.

That proved true as Iowa finished the regular season with a perfect 12-0 record, one of just two FBS teams that held that distinction last year. From there, however, the season took on a sour note. The Hawkeyes lost the Big Ten Championship Game to Michigan State in heartbreaking fashion in the fourth quarter before getting blown out by Stanford in their first Rose Bowl appearance since 1991.

It certainly wasn't the way that team should be remembered, but there's room to improve as Ferentz enters his 18th year on the sideline. He's tied with Oklahoma's Bob Stoops for the longest-tenured coach in the FBS. The good news is Iowa will be right back in the hunt for the Big Ten West championship.

That run starts with senior quarterback C.J. Beathard, who gives the Hawkeyes a sense of stability at the position. Beathard completed 61.6 percent of his passes with 17 TDs and five interceptions last season, and he flashed an uncanny ability to escape trouble with 237 rushing yards and six TDs. LeShun Daniels Jr. is the top returning back, but Akrum Wadley could see more touches after averaging 6.0 yards per carry. Running back is a position of strength for this offense. Keep in mind Iowa ranked second in the Big Ten with 35 rushing TDs last season. They will continue to pound.

The receiving corps is led by senior Matt VandeBerg, who led the Hawkeyes with 65 receptions for 703 yards and four TDs. Iowa will have to replace big-play wideout Tevaun Smith (17.6 yards per catch on 32 receptions), and a cast of young receivers led by Jerminic

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

CB **Desmond King**

The first-team All-Big Ten cornerback returns for his senior season after a monstrous 2015 that saw him pile up 72 tackles, 13 pass breakups and eight interceptions. The eight picks ranked second nationally and tied an Iowa record set by Hawkeye legend and 1939 Heisman Trophy winner Nile Kinnick. The Hawkeyes return eight starters on defense from a 2015 team that started last season 12-0, and the 5-11, 200-pound senior from Detroit should be the ringleader. King, who won the 2015 Thorpe Award that is presented to the nation's best defensive back, is also a great threat on special teams, having returned 46 punts and kickoffs for 949 yards.

KING: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

Smith, Jay Scheel and Riley McCarron will take on that role.

Tight end has always been a staple in Iowa's offense, and George Kittle could be a breakout player there. He averaged 14.5 yards per reception and showed an ability to get open down the seam. He led Iowa with six receiving scores last season.

Replacing center Austin Blythe is the biggest concern for the offensive line, where there's experience but also a lack of depth. James Daniels and Steve Ferentz will have to step up at center to keep the continuity going.

Iowa's defense received a lift when All-America cornerback Desmond King decided to return to school for his senior campaign. King ranked second in the nation with eight interceptions last season, and he's a potential first-round NFL pick if he has another big year for the Hawkeyes. He's the biggest piece for a defense that ranked fifth in the Big Ten by allowing just 20.4 points per game last season.

The Hawkeyes also were effective at stopping the run. Iowa allowed only 11 rushing TDs, and that included just one through the first eight weeks. Leading tackler Josey Jewell returns, and he'll anchor the linebacking corps. Ben Niemann and Aaron Mends will need to step up at that position. Defensive line has a few question marks, especially with Drew Ott's request for a sixth year of eligibility (after suffering a torn ACL last season) being denied. Iowa will somehow need to find a pass rush from its front four.

Iowa's schedule has a few interesting potholes, but the Hawkeyes are the Big Ten team that doesn't have crossover games against heavyweights Ohio State or Michigan State. The nonconference schedule features the traditional rivalry game against Iowa State and a tricky date with FCS powerhouse North Dakota State. Iowa can't take the Bison, who have won five straight FCS titles, lightly.

From there, all the marquee games are in the comforts of Kinnick Stadium. That includes showdowns against Northwestern, Wisconsin, Michigan and Nebraska in the season finale. That friendly schedule could be the path to another trip to the Big Ten Championship Game, but the Hawkeyes have to be wary of tricky road tests at Penn State and Minnesota.

Ferentz won't change much in his approach. He rarely does. As long as Beathard continues to play well and Iowa controls the running game on both sides again, another season of double-digit wins is in the making.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Hawkeyes signed a top-50 class in 2016 off the heels of a Rose Bowl berth, bringing in 24 recruits who are led by quarterback Nate Stanley and a strong contingent from Detroit and Chicago. The 6-5, 212-pound Stanley is a strong-armed passer with plus athleticism who will certainly be a factor in the QB race upon his arrival. The heart of Iowa's class hails from Motown (defensive end Cedrick Lattimore and offensive tackle Alaric Jackson) and the Windy City (receiver Emmanuel Rugamba and defensive end Romeo McKnight). That Rose Bowl finish is already paying huge dividends in 2017 as Iowa is pushing for a top-25 class in the new cycle.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Cedrick Lattimore,** DE ★★★
2. **Nate Stanley,** QB ★★★
3. **Noah Fant,** TE/DE ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

C.J. Beathard	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	14	139.5	223-362-5	61.6	2809	17	200.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
LeShun Daniels Jr.	12	145	646	4.5	8	53.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Matt VandeBerg	14	65	703	10.8	4	50.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Josey Jewell	14	62	64	126

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Jaleel Johnson	14	4.0	24
Ben Niemann	14	4.0	17

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Desmond King	8	118	14.8	1

TEAM TRADITION

On the south side of Kinnick Stadium stands a 20-foot-tall bronze statue of Nile Kinnick, Iowa's only Heisman Trophy winner (1939) who gave his life in 1943 while serving in World War II. Since 2006, players have rubbed the helmet that sits at the statue's feet for good luck before entering the locker room. A video of Kinnick's Heisman speech is shown on the video board before each home game.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	IOWA	OPP
SCORING	433	285
Points Per Game	30.9	20.4
FIRST DOWNS	284	270
Rushing	135	99
Passing	123	145
Penalty	26	26
RUSHING YARDAGE	2544	1700
Yards gained rushing	2927	2004
Yards lost rushing	383	304
Rushing Attempts	568	469
Average Per Rush	4.5	3.6
Average Per Game	181.7	121.4
TDs Rushing	35	11
PASSING YARDAGE	2862	3074
Comp-Att-Int	227-369-5	265-493-19
Average Per Pass	7.8	6.2
Average Per Catch	12.6	11.6
Average Per Game	204.4	219.6
TDs Passing	17	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	5406	4774
Total Plays	937	962
Average Per Play	5.8	5.0
Average Per Game	386.1	341.0
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	35-797	36-848
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	18-251	13-180
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	19-321	5-113
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.8	23.6
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.9	13.8
INT RETURN AVG.	16.9	22.6
FUMBLES-LOST	19-11	15-8
PENALTIES-YARDS	73-683	89-824
Average Per Game	48.8	58.9
PUNTS-YARDS	68-2698	76-3101
Average Per Punt	39.7	40.8
Net punt average	35.9	37.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:38	28:22
3RD-DOWN CONV.	80/192	77/210
3rd-Down Pct.	42%	37%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/14	15/27
4th-Down Pct.	64%	56%
SACKS BY-YARDS	30-217	30-221
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	56	32
FG-ATTEMPTS	16-20	20-24
ATTENDANCE	441992	322137
Games/Avg Per Game	7/63142	5/64427
Neutral Site Games		2/80626

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
IOWA	74	153	75	131	0	433
Opponent	47	99	48	91	0	285

5-YEAR RECORD 38-27

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**C.J. Beathard** (6-2, 209, Sr.)
	Tyler Wiegers (6-4, 222, So.)
FB	**Drake Kulick** (6-1, 228, Jr.)
	Brady Ross (6-1, 220, Fr.)
TB	**LeShun Daniels Jr.** (6-0, 225, Sr.)
	Akrum Wadley (5-11, 185, Jr.)
LT	**Cole Croston** (6-5, 295, Sr.)
	Boone Myers (6-5, 300, Jr.)
LG	**Boone Myers** (6-5, 300, Jr.)
	Ryan Ward (6-5, 290, Sr.)
C	**James Daniels** (6-4, 285, So.)
	Steve Ferentz (6-2, 278, Sr.)
RG	**Sean Welsh** (6-3, 288, Jr.)
	Keegan Render (6-4, 305, So.)
RT	**Ike Boettger** (6-6, 300, Jr.)
	Dalton Ferguson (6-4, 307, So.)
TE	**George Kittle** (6-4, 235, Sr.)
	Jameer Outsey (6-3, 235, So.)
WR	**Jerminic Smith** (6-1, 180, So.)
	Jay Scheel (6-1, 195, So.)
WR	**Matt VandeBerg** (6-1, 185, Sr.)
	Riley McCarron (5-9, 186, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Matt Nelson** (6-8, 270, So.)
	Sam Brincks (6-5, 260, So.)
DT	**Jaleel Johnson** (6-4, 310, Sr.)
	Faith Ekakitie (6-3, 290, Sr.)
DT	**Nathan Bazata** (6-2, 284, Jr.)
	Kyle Terlouw (6-4, 288, Sr.)
DE	**Parker Hesse** (6-3, 240, So.)
	Anthony Nelson (6-7, 220, Fr.)
LB	**Ben Niemann** (6-3, 225, Jr.)
	Bo Bower (6-1, 228, Jr.)
LB	**Josey Jewell** (6-2, 230, Jr.)
	Jack Hockaday (6-1, 215, So.)
LB	**Aaron Mends** (6-0, 212, So.)
	Jack Hockaday (6-1, 215, So.)
CB	**Greg Mabin** (6-2, 200, Sr.)
	Maurice Fleming (6-0, 205, Sr.)
CB	**Desmond King** (5-11, 200, Sr.)
	Josh Jackson (6-1, 185, So.)
FS	**Miles Taylor** (6-0, 195, Jr.)
	Anthony Gair (6-2, 210, Sr.)
SS	**Brandon Snyder** (6-1, 210, So.)
	Jake Gervase (6-1, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Miguel Recinos** (6-1, 180, So.)
P	**Colten Rastetter** (6-2, 205, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

WISCONSIN
BADGERS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Vince Biegel

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	LSU*	
S.10	Akron	
S.17	Georgia State	
S.24	@MICHIGAN STATE	
O.1	@MICHIGAN	
O.15	Ohio State	
O.22	@IOWA	6-10
O.29	Nebraska	23-21
N.5	@NORTHWESTERN	7-13
N.12	Illinois	24-13
N.19	@PURDUE	24-7
N.26	Minnesota	31-21

*At Green Bay, WI

COACH

Paul Chryst
Second year (10-3)
CAREER RECORD: 29-22

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joe Rudolph (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Justin Wilcox (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3 *(Beat USC in the Holiday Bowl, 23-21)*
STADIUM: Camp Randall Stadium (80,321)
TICKETS: 800-GO-BADGERS
SITE: Madison, Wis.
WEBSITE: uwbadgers.com
TWITTER: @BadgerFootball

A 10-win season at Wisconsin rarely goes unnoticed, but that was kind of the theme of Paul Chryst's first year as head coach in Madison.

The Badgers lost the season opener to eventual national champion Alabama and fell out of the Big Ten West race with an early-season loss to Iowa. Wisconsin lost its perch atop the division, and a 13-7 loss to Northwestern proved to be the low point.

Still, Wisconsin did hit double-digit wins and beat USC in the Holiday Bowl. It wasn't a disappointing season, but for a school that has made three Big Ten Championship Game appearances in five years, it also didn't live up to the standard.

The biggest offseason change is the loss of renowned defensive coordinator Dave Aranda, who left for LSU. That's significant because the Badgers led the Big Ten in scoring defense (13.7 points per game). Justin Wilcox, who served as defensive coordinator at Southern Cal the last two seasons, is the replacement.

The next task for Chryst as he enters Year Two is finding a quarterback, and the competition figures to be between fifth-year senior Bart Houston and redshirt freshman Alex Hornibrook. Houston has the experience and will be the favorite to win the job entering fall camp. Wisconsin quarterbacks combined for 14 touchdowns, 13 interceptions and a 60.1 completion percentage last season. Chryst needs more out of that position.

Wisconsin won't go anywhere without improvements in the running game, though. The Badgers averaged 3.8 yards per rushing attempt last season, their lowest mark since 2004. Wisconsin averaged 6.9 yards per carry the previous season with Melvin Gordon

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

LB **Vince Biegel**

A Wisconsin team that has some question marks on offense returns a handful of defensive starters to boost its efforts to get back to the top of the Big Ten after last year's 6-2 league finish. Opposite of graduated All-American Joe Schobert, Biegel finished second on the team in sacks (8.0) and compiled 66 tackles. The 6-4, 242-pound linebacker from Wisconsin Rapids opted to come back for his senior campaign despite being told by scouts that he would be selected somewhere between the third and fifth rounds of the NFL Draft.

BIEGEL: CHRIS WILLIAMS / ICON SPORTSWIRE

running the ball.

A healthy Corey Clement, who is coming off a disappointing year in which he suffered a sports hernia and groin injuries and was also suspended for the regular-season finale, will look to change that. Clement averaged 4.6 yards per carry in 2015. If the problems continue, Wisconsin can turn to Dare Ogunbowale, who finished ninth in the Big Ten with 819 rushing yards.

The Badgers will have to find a go-to receiver with Alex Erickson gone. Robert Wheelwright is the top returning receiver, and Troy Fumagalli is a big target at tight end.

Perhaps the best news on offense is Wisconsin's O-line doesn't have the same question marks as last season. Four starters return, and center Dan Voltz is an All-America candidate who anchors this unit. The Badgers are beefy across the board and will look to improve on those rushing totals.

Wilcox has some talent to work with on the defensive side despite the loss of standout linebacker Joe Schobert. Vince Biegel could step into that leadership role for the Badgers after coming up with 66 tackles and eight sacks from his outside-linebacker spot last season. The defensive line has depth and returns two key players in ends Conor Sheehy and Chikwe Obasih. Wisconsin's line didn't generate a lot of sacks last season.

The secondary has holes to fill after losing three starters, including team leader Michael Caputo. Sojourn Shelton is the lone returning starter, and the senior cornerback will be counted on to break in the new talent.

Wisconsin had the best statistical defense (268.5 yards per game) in the Big Ten last season. The challenge will be keeping it that way with a transition at coordinator.

The Badgers' schedule is truly brutal. The opener against LSU at Lambeau Field is just the start of it, and that's a big test for two teams that played a tight game in 2014 at Houston.

Check out the Badgers' first four Big Ten dates. It starts with road games at Michigan State and Michigan before a bye week. Wisconsin then welcomes Ohio State before traveling to Iowa. From there, the Badgers face Nebraska at home. That's all before November, and it's the toughest route in the Big Ten West division. That makes it difficult to pick Wisconsin to win the West even though it is a proven commodity capable of making it back to Indianapolis. The road back to double-digit wins is simply a little more difficult this time around.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Paul Chryst's first full recruiting class at Wisconsin was a full boat. The Badgers signed 25 and finished with the nation's No. 32 class per the 247Sports rankings (No. 6 in the Big Ten). A pair of U.S. Army All-Americans headline the group: In-state offensive lineman Cole Van Lanen is a versatile player who could play anywhere across the front, and defensive tackle Garrett Rand is perhaps the strongest player in the country. It's a balanced class across the board and includes the No. 1 recruit out of Kansas in versatile four-star offensive playmaker A.J. Taylor, who plays tailback and wideout.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STARRATINGS

1. **Cole Van Lanen,** OL ★★★★
2. **Garrett Rand,** DT ★★★★
3. **A.J. Taylor,** RB/WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Bart Houston	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	7	120.2	27-47-2	57.4	281	3	40.1

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Dare Ogunbowale	13	194	819	4.2	7	63.0

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Robert Wheelwright	9	32	416	13.0	4	46.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
T.J. Edwards	13	41	43	84

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Vince Biegel	13	8.0	64

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Leo Musso	2	4	2.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

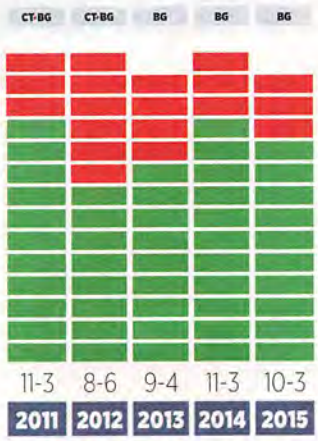
On Oct. 10, 1998, Wisconsin was playing host to the Drew Brees-led Purdue Boilermakers. With the game close at the end of the third quarter, a Badgers' marketing agent in charge of sound piped in the House of Pain song "Jump Around." The student section erupted, jumping up and down and causing the stadium to literally shake. A tradition was born, and with the exception of one game in 2006, it continues to this day.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	WISC	OPP
SCORING	348	178
Points Per Game	26.8	13.7
FIRST DOWNS	276	183
Rushing	95	60
Passing	157	107
Penalty	24	16
RUSHING YARDAGE	1954	1240
Yards gained rushing	2257	1566
Yards lost rushing	303	326
Rushing Attempts	512	396
Average Per Rush	3.8	3.1
Average Per Game	150.3	95.4
TDs Rushing	27	13
PASSING YARDAGE	2968	2251
Comp-Att-Int	252-419-13	194-395-12
Average Per Pass	7.1	5.7
Average Per Catch	11.8	11.6
Average Per Game	228.3	173.2
TDs Passing	14	7
TOTAL OFFENSE	4922	3491
Total Plays	931	791
Average Per Play	5.3	4.4
Average Per Game	378.6	268.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	28-555	55-935
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	29-211	17-69
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-105	13-195
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.8	17.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	7.3	4.1
INT RETURN AVG.	9.5	15.0
FUMBLES-LOST	15-5	14-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-689	99-869
Average Per Game	53.0	66.8
PUNTS-YARDS	71-2788	85-3434
Average Per Punt	39.3	40.4
Net punt average	35.5	37.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	33:52	26:08
3RD-DOWN CONV.	75/184	59/189
3rd-Down Pct.	41%	31%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	6/8	6/20
4th-Down Pct.	75%	30%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-221	25-166
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	42	22
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-27	8-19
ATTENDANCE	546099	297131
Games/Avg Per Game	7/78014	5/59426
Neutral Site Games		1/48329

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
WISCONSIN	68	119	89	72	0	348
Opponent	37	68	35	38	0	178

5-YEAR RECORD 49-19



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Bart Houston** (6-4, 232, Sr.)
	Alex Hornibrook (6-4, 216, Fr.)
FB	**Austin Ramesh** (6-1, 250, Jr.)
	Alec Ingold (6-2, 241, So.)
RB	**Corey Clement** (5-11, 214, Sr.)
	Dare Ogunbowale (5-11, 201, Sr.)
LT	**Beau Benzschawel** (6-6, 306, So.)
	Ryan Ramczyk (6-6, 308, Jr.)
LG	**Jon Dietzen** (6-6, 332, Fr.)
	Micah Kapoi (6-3, 323, So.)
C	**Dan Voltz** (6-3, 301, Sr.)
	George Panos (6-5, 317, So.)
RG	**Michael Deiter** (6-6, 318, So.)
	Logan Schmidt (6-4, 310, Sr.)
RT	**Jacob Maxwell** (6-6, 319, So.)
	Cole Van Lanen (6-5, 280, Fr.)
TE	**Troy Fumagalli** (6-6, 251, Jr.)
	Eric Steffes (6-5, 263, Sr.)
WR	**Robert Wheelwright** (6-3, 203, Sr.)
	George Rushing (6-1, 191, Jr.)
WR	**Jazz Peavy** (6-0, 182, Jr.)
	Krenwick Sanders (6-2, 212, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Conor Sheehy** (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Zander Neuville (6-5, 258, So.)
NT	**Jeremy Patterson** (6-3, 340, So.)
	Olive Sagapolu (6-2, 333, So.)
DE	**Chikwe Obasih** (6-3, 268, Jr.)
	Alec James (6-3, 267, Jr.)
LB	**Vince Biegel** (6-4, 242, Sr.)
	Nick Thomas (6-2, 228, Fr.)
LB	**Chris Orr** (6-0, 227, So.)
	Keelon Brookins (5-11, 220, Jr.)
LB	**T.J. Edwards** (6-1, 239, So.)
	Jack Cichy (6-2, 221, Jr.)
LB	**Leon Jacobs** (6-2, 235, Sr.)
	T.J. Watt (6-5, 243, Jr.)
CB	**Sojourn Shelton** (5-9, 173, Sr.)
	Natrell Jamerson (6-0, 187, Jr.)
CB	**Derrick Tindal** (5-11, 175, Jr.)
	Titus Booker (5-11, 192, Fr.)
S	**D'Cota Dixon** (5-10, 202, Jr.)
	Leo Musso (5-10, 186, Sr.)
S	**Arrington Farrar** (6-2, 208, So.)
	Joe Ferguson (6-1, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Andrew Endicott** (5-9, 175, Sr.)
P	**P.J. Rosowski** (6-3, 202, So.)

Sporting News All-American

NEBRASKA
CORNHUSKERS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Tommy Armstrong Jr.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Fresno State	
S.10	Wyoming	
S.17	Oregon	
S.24	@NORTHWESTERN	28-30
O.1	Illinois	13-14
O.15	@INDIANA	
O.22	Purdue	45-55
O.29	@WISCONSIN	21-23
N.5	@OHIO STATE	
N.12	Minnesota	48-25
N.19	Maryland	
N.25	@IOWA	20-28

COACH

Mike Riley
Second year (6-7)
CAREER RECORD: 99-87

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Danny Langsdorf (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mark Banker (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Beat UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl, 37-29)
STADIUM: Memorial Stadium (85,000)
TICKETS: 800-8-BIGRED
SITE: Lincoln, Neb.
WEBSITE: huskers.com
TWITTER: @HuskerFBNation

Nebraska coach Mike Riley did not exactly have a semi-charmed first season in Lincoln.

In fact, the Cornhuskers had next to no charm at all. It started with a "Hail Mary" loss to BYU in the season opener and spiraled out of control into a seven-loss campaign. Those seven losses, however, were by a combined 31 points.

The breaks started to go Nebraska's way after a bottom-out loss to Purdue. The Cornhuskers won three of their last four games, including wins against Michigan State in the regular season and UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl. The end result was a 6-7 season. Needless to say, expectations call for more at a program like Nebraska.

It's now-or-never time for quarterback Tommy Armstrong Jr., whose up-and-down play has epitomized Nebraska since it moved to the Big Ten. Armstrong has 53 TDs and 36 interceptions for his career, but he has completed just 54 percent of his passes. He is also just 2-5 as a starter against ranked teams. Armstrong must be more consistent for the Huskers to contend in the Big Ten West.

Another plus is that Riley's team returns two running backs in Terrell Newby and Devine Ozigbo, each of whom averaged more than 5.0 yards per carry last season. Newby figures to carry the bulk of the workload. Nebraska also has a deep receiving corps led by sure-handed wideout Jordan Westerkamp, who had 918 receiving yards and seven TDs. He's an excellent fit in Riley's offensive scheme. Alonzo Moore, De'Mornay Pierson-El and Stanley Morgan Jr. add depth at the position. If Cethan Carter can be more

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Tommy Armstrong Jr.**

After vowing to reinvent himself as a quarterback before last season by getting back to fundamentals, Armstrong made vast improvements and became a better leader for a Cornhuskers team that needs him to be a bona fide offensive weapon. The 6-1, 220-pound Texan threw for 3,030 yards, ranking third in the conference, while finishing second in the league with 252.5 passing yards per game. It was only the fifth 3,000-yard passing season in Nebraska history. Armstrong did lead the Big Ten in interceptions (16), but he got better as the season progressed, saving one of his best games for last. He won the Offensive MVP award in the Huskers' 37-29 win over UCLA in the Foster Farms Bowl, rushing 10 times for 76 yards and one touchdown while throwing for 174 yards and another score. He's primed for a big senior season.

ARMSTRONG JR.: WILFREDO LEE / AP

consistent at tight end, then the Cornhuskers' passing game could take off.

Of course, much of that depends on an offensive line that lost four starters from last season. That's a huge question mark, and center Dylan Utter is the most reliable option left. This unit needs to jell throughout fall camp.

For all the criticisms of Riley's first year, it's important to note the offense did rank third in the Big Ten with 32.8 points per game. There's potential to make another jump this season.

The defense will need to make more stops for that to be possible. Last year, Nebraska allowed 27.8 points per game, which ranked 10th in the Big Ten. That included a pass defense that ranked 13th in the conference by allowing 290.5 yards per game.

Senior safety Nate Gerry is the anchor on that side of the ball who's tasked with making the pass defense better. He's a well-rounded player who led the Huskers with 79 total tackles and four interceptions last season. Chris Jones and Joshua Kalu give Nebraska a pair of experienced cornerbacks.

The defensive line was a victim of the NFL Draft, as Maliek Collins and Vincent Valentine both left for the pros. That could be offset if Freedom Akinmoladun, who led the Cornhuskers with 4.5 sacks last season, emerges as a more consistent edge rusher. Fellow end Ross Dzuris led Nebraska with nine tackles for loss. Tackle Greg McMullen also should be a factor.

There are fewer question marks at linebacker, where Josh Banderas and Dedrick Young are the top returners. Both had 61 tackles last season and are reliable in the middle.

Overall, defensive coordinator Mark Banker will be pressured to deliver better results this year.

It depends on what you believe. Were all those close losses last year just the norm for Nebraska? Or was the strong finish a sign of progress under Riley? The nonconference schedule features home games against Fresno State and an early-season showdown against Oregon, which serves as the measuring stick. Nebraska hasn't defeated a ranked nonconference team in the regular season since 2001.

From there, it's on to Big Ten play, where patience is running thin. Nebraska is just 25-15 in conference play since joining the league in 2011, and that includes a 4-7 record against ranked teams. The meat of the schedule will be back-to-back road games at Wisconsin and Ohio State. Nebraska also plays at Iowa in the regular-season finale. There's reason to believe Riley's Huskers will do better than last year's 6-7 record, but that will come down to better performances in the close games.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Mike Riley's first full class in Lincoln finished No. 24 in the 247Sports rankings and fifth in the Big Ten. The Huskers did great work across the country, especially in California, where they landed Top247 quarterback Patrick O'Brien, Top247 defensive back Lamar Jackson, four-star safety Marquel Dismuke and record-setting receiver Derrion Grim. Top247 offensive tackle Matt Farniok was a huge get and, along with Grim, receiver JD Spielman and running back Tre Bryant, this is a class full of exciting players at their respective positions.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 **Lamar Jackson,** S ★★★★
2 **John Raridon,** OL ★★★★
3 **Patrick O'Brien,** QB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Tommy Armstrong Jr.	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	12	128.6	222-402-16	55.2	3030	22	252.5

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Terrell Newby	13	147	765	5.2	6	58.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jordan Westerkamp	13	65	918	14.1	7	70.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Nate Gerry	13	49	30	79

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Freedom Akinmoladun	11	4.5	36

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Nate Gerry	4	90	22.5	0

TEAM TRADITION

Nebraska football has many great traditions, from "The Sea of Red" nickname given to their fans, to the famed Blackshirts defense, to the awe-inspiring "Tunnel Walk," to the release of thousands of red balloons after the team's first score to the NCAA-record 347 straight sellouts at Memorial Stadium. But the best tradition may occur at the end of games when, win or lose, Husker fans give opposing players a standing ovation as they leave the field.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	NEB	OPP
SCORING	427	362
Points Per Game	32.8	27.8
FIRST DOWNS	296	246
Rushing	114	57
Passing	160	163
Penalty	22	26
RUSHING YARDAGE	2340	1428
Yards gained rushing	2650	1756
Yards lost rushing	310	328
Rushing Attempts	496	379
Average Per Rush	4.7	3.8
Average Per Game	180.0	109.8
TDs Rushing	24	18
PASSING YARDAGE	3470	3777
Comp-Att-Int	256-458-21	293-506-10
Average Per Pass	7.6	7.5
Average Per Catch	13.6	12.9
Average Per Game	266.9	290.5
TDs Passing	27	25
TOTAL OFFENSE	5810	5205
Total Plays	954	885
Average Per Play	6.1	5.9
Average Per Game	446.9	400.4
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	35-637	47-888
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	11-114	18-207
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	10-143	21-370
KICK RETURN AVG.	18.2	18.9
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.4	11.5
INT RETURN AVG.	14.3	17.6
FUMBLES-LOST	11-6	15-5
PENALTIES-YARDS	94-829	84-751
Average Per Game	63.8	57.8
PUNTS-YARDS	61-2662	71-2852
Average Per Punt	43.6	40.2
Net punt average	38.3	36.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	32:24	27:36
3RD-DOWN CONV.	81/181	64/188
3rd-Down Pct.	45%	34%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/8	9/25
4th-Down Pct.	62%	36%
SACKS BY-YARDS	24-162	14-143
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	52	45
FG-ATTEMPTS	21-27	16-24
ATTENDANCE	629983	224737
Games/Avg Per Game	7/89998	5/44947
Neutral Site Games		1/33527

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
NEBRASKA	91	106	89	141	0	427
Opponent	55	107	82	115	3	362

5-YEAR RECORD 43-23

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Tommy Armstrong** (6-1, 220, Sr.)
	Ryker Fyfe (6-3, 215, Sr.)
RB	**Terrell Newby** (5-10, 200, Sr.)
	Devine Ozigbo (5-11, 230, So.)
LT	**Nick Gates** (6-5, 290, So.)
	David Knevel (6-9, 315, Jr.)
LG	**Jerald Foster** (6-3, 310, So.)
	Jalin Barnett (6-4, 310, Fr.)
C	**Dylan Utter** (6-1, 295, Sr.)
	Michael Decker (6-4, 285, Fr.)
RG	**Corey Whitaker** (6-5, 295, Sr.)
	Tanner Farmer (6-4, 295, So.)
RT	**David Knevel** (6-9, 315, Jr.)
	Christian Gaylord (6-6, 300, Fr.)
TE	**Cethan Carter** (6-4, 240, Sr.)
	Trey Foster (6-2, 250, Sr.)
WR	**Alonzo Moore** (6-2, 195, Sr.)
	Brandon Reilly (6-2, 200, Sr.)
WR	**Jordan Westerkamp** (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	Stanley Morgan Jr. (6-1, 200, So.)
WR	**De'Mornay Pierson-El** (5-9, 185, Jr.)
	Brandon Reilly (6-2, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Freedom Akinmoladun** (6-4, 255, So.)
	Alex Davis (6-5, 255, Fr.)
DT	**Greg McMullen** (6-5, 300, Sr.)
	Kevin Williams (6-2, 275, Sr.)
DT	**Kevin Maurice** (6-3, 300, Sr.)
	Mick Stoltenberg (6-5, 290, So.)
DE	**Ross Dzuris** (6-3, 255, Sr.)
	Sedrick King (6-4, 250, So.)
LB	**Josh Banderas** (6-3, 240, Sr.)
	Marcus Newby (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LB	**Michael Rose-Ivey** (5-11, 240, Sr.)
	Chris Weber (6-3, 230, Jr.)
LB	**Dedrick Young** (6-1, 220, So.)
	Tyrin Ferguson (6-2, 225, So.)
CB	**Joshua Kalu** (6-1, 190, Jr.)
	Eric Lee Jr. (6-0, 190, Fr.)
CB	**Chris Jones** (6-0, 185, Jr.)
	Boaz Joseph (6-1, 190, Jr.)
S	**Nate Gerry** (6-2, 210, Sr.)
	Antonio Reed (6-2, 220, So.)
S	**Kieron Williams** (6-1, 195, Jr.)
	Aaron Williams (5-11, 185, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Drew Brown** (5-11, 195, Jr.)
P	**Sam Foltz** (6-2, 205, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

NORTHWESTERN
WILDCATS

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Justin Jackson

Northwestern is coming off its second 10-win season in four years under coach Pat Fitzgerald, a nice bounce back after compiling just 10 wins over the previous two years. What those 10 wins meant depends on your point of view.

On one hand, Northwestern beat Stanford, Penn State and Wisconsin. On the other, the Wildcats' three losses to Michigan, Iowa and Tennessee were by a combined score of 123-16. Fitzgerald made progress, but it's not a full-fledged breakthrough.

The good news for Northwestern is that Justin Jackson, the Big Ten's top returning rusher from last season, is back for his junior campaign. Jackson rushed for 1,418 yards and 4.5 yards per carry last year, but he scored only five TDs. Jackson is a tough and shifty runner who has 2,605 rushing yards the last two seasons. He has a chance to break Tyrell Sutton's career school record of 3,886 yards this season.

A consistent passing game would do this offense wonders. Dual-threat quarterback Clayton Thorson completed just 50.8 percent of his passes with seven TDs and nine interceptions last season. Austin Carr is the top returning receiver, and he had 16 catches in 2015. If the Wildcats can't find a way to throw the ball more effectively, they'll be in trouble. Thorson, Carr and some other young receivers will need to emerge.

Linebacker Anthony Walker, who totaled 122 tackles and 20.5 tackles for loss last season, is an All-America candidate the defense can build around. Tyler Lancaster and C.J. Robbins make up a strong tandem up front at tackle. Northwestern has a solid front seven, and cornerback Matthew Harris returns after making four interceptions last season. The Wildcats allowed 19 points or less in eight of their 10 wins last season. This unit could be just as good in 2016.

Getting back to 10 wins isn't going to be easy for Fitzgerald. Northwestern plays its first four games at home, and the latter two are against Duke and Nebraska. The second third of the schedule is brutal with road games at Iowa, Michigan State and Ohio State. A strong finish is possible with home dates against Wisconsin and Illinois, but Fitzgerald could show this team learned lessons from last year's blowouts against this slate. It won't be easy.

As always, Northwestern is a hard-to-predict factor in the Big Ten race. That shouldn't be any different in 2016.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Western Michigan	
S.10	Illinois State	
S.17	Duke	19-10
S.24	Nebraska	30-28
O.1	@IOWA	10-40
O.15	@MICHIGAN STATE	
O.22	Indiana	
O.29	@OHIO STATE	
N.5	Wisconsin	13-7
N.12	@PURDUE	21-14
N.19	@MINNESOTA	27-0
N.26	Illinois	24-14

COACH

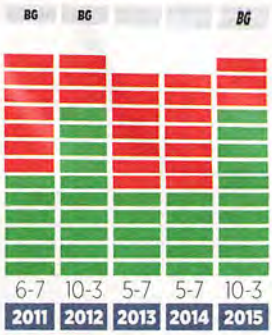
Pat Fitzgerald
11th year (70-56)
CAREER RECORD: 70-56

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mick McCall (ninth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Hankwitz (ninth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Tennessee in the Outback Bowl, 45-6)
STADIUM: Ryan Field (47,130)
TICKETS: 888-GO-PURPLE
SITE: Evanston, Ill.
WEBSITE: nusports.com
TWITTER: @NUFBFamily

5-YEAR RECORD
36-27



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Clayton Thorson (6-4, 220, So.)
RB	Justin Jackson (5-11, 190, Jr.)
HB	Garrett Dickerson (6-3, 245, Jr.)
LT	Blake Hance (6-5, 300, So.)
LG	Ian Park (6-4, 305, Sr.)
C	Brad North (6-2, 290, Jr.)
RG	Shane Mertz (6-8, 310, Sr.)
RT	Eric Olson (6-6, 295, Sr.)
WR	Austin Carr (6-1, 195, Sr.)
WR	Solomon Vault (5-10, 190, Jr.)
WR	Flynn Nagel (5-11, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

LE	Ifeadi Odenigbo (6-3, 250, Sr.)
DT	Tyler Lancaster (6-3, 300, Jr.)
DT	C.J. Robbins (6-5, 300, Sr.)
RE	Xavier Washington (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LB	Jaylen Prater (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LB	Anthony Walker (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LB	Nate Hall (6-2, 230, So.)
CB	Keith Watkins II (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	Matthew Harris (5-11, 180, Sr.)
S	Godwin Igwebuike (6-0, 200, Jr.)
S	Kyle Queiro (6-3, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jack Mitchell (6-3, 210, Sr.)
P	Hunter Niswander (6-5, 235, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

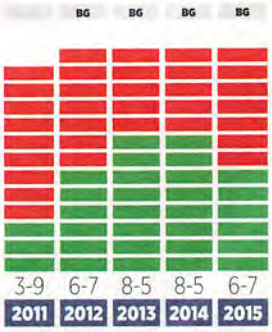
1. **Jeremy Larkin,** RB ★★★
2. **Roderick Campbell Jr.,** CB ★★★
3. **Tommy Carnifax,** DE ★★★

The Wildcats' 20-player class, which ranked No. 52 nationally and No. 10 in the Big Ten, is led by perhaps Ohio's best high school player in running back Jeremy Larkin and cornerback Roderick Campbell Jr. of St. Louis. The sleeper of the class is Riley Lees, who will catch a lot of passes in the Big Ten. Ohio was good to the Wildcats this cycle, as defensive linemen Tommy Carnifax and Jake Saunders are two more prospects to be excited about.

JACKSON: NAM Y. HUH / AP

MINNESOTA
GOLDEN GOPHERS

5-YEAR RECORD
31-33



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Mitch Leidner (6-4, 237, Sr.)
RB	Shannon Brooks (6-0, 206, So.)
LT	Nick Connelly (6-7, 286, Fr.)
LG	Garrison Wright (6-4, 318, Jr.)
C	Tyler Moore (6-4, 306, So.)
RG	Vincent Calhoun (6-4, 335, Jr.)
RT	Jonah Pirsig (6-9, 316, Sr.)
TE	Nate Wozniak (6-10, 271, Jr.)
TE	Brandon Lingen (6-5, 247, Jr.)
WR	Drew Wolitarsky (6-3, 218, Sr.)
WR	Eric Carter (5-11, 189, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Scott Ekpe (6-4, 290, Sr.)
DT	Andrew Stelter (6-4, 277, Jr.)
DT	Steven Richardson (6-0, 291, Jr.)
DE	Hendrick Ekpe (6-5, 243, Sr.)
LB	Jonathan Celestin (6-1, 224, Jr.)
LB	Jack Lynn (6-3, 238, Sr.)
LB	Cody Poock (6-2, 230, Jr.)
CB	Jalen Myrick (5-10, 205, Sr.)
CB	KiAnte Hardin (5-10, 170, So.)
FS	Damarius Travis (6-2, 208, Sr.)
SS	Adekunle Ayinde (6-0, 203, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ryan Santoso (6-6, 250, Jr.)
P	Logan McElfresh (6-1, 193, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Carter Coughlin,** LB ★★★★
2 **Seth Green,** QB ★★★
3 **Tyler Johnson,** ATH ★★★

The Gophers' top-50 class ranked No. 48 nationally and No. 9 in the Big Ten per 247Sports. It's led by the country's most athletic linebacker recruit in U.S. Army All-American Carter Coughlin, the top-ranked recruit in Minnesota. The Gophers signed 24 players, including another in-state standout, receiver Drew Hmielewski, who has the talent to become one of the best wideouts in the Big Ten.

RB **Shannon Brooks**

BROOKS: PAUL BATTAGLIA / AP

Minnesota's makeover started last season when Jerry Kill resigned for health reasons with five games left in the regular season.

Interim coach Tracy Claeys was named the full-time replacement and led the Gophers to a win in the Quick Lane Bowl against Central Michigan. Claeys' first big move as head coach was to bring in Louisiana-Lafayette offensive coordinator Jay Johnson for 2016. The Gophers ranked 13th in the Big Ten in scoring offense at 22.5 points per game in 2015. That's not good enough.

Johnson figures to make the most out of senior quarterback Mitch Leidner's dual-threat talents. Leidner's rushing yards went down and his interception total went up last year, but he has started 29 games over the past three seasons and that experience will be counted on.

Leading rusher Shannon Brooks also returns and figures to carry the workload in that attack. He averaged 6.0 yards per carry as a freshman and scored seven TDs. Minnesota needs a receiver to step up in KJ Maye's place, and Drew Wolitarsky and Eric Carter are candidates. The offensive line returns just two starters. Claeys also brought in Bart Miller from Florida Atlantic to run the offensive line. It will be interesting to see how Claeys balances the old-school power-running game Kill favored with the spread principles Johnson brings to the scheme.

Minnesota needs to find a few playmakers on defense. Linebacker Cody Poock returns after ranking second with 99 tackles last season, and the secondary will require a face-lift after losing Briean Boddy-Calhoun. Cornerback Jalen Myrick could develop into an all-conference performer like Boddy-Calhoun. The Gophers also ranked 11th in the Big Ten with just 22 sacks.

The early-season schedule should be a little kinder to Minnesota in 2016. Oregon State, Indiana State and Colorado State all visit TCF Bank Stadium, and the home conference schedule includes Iowa and Northwestern. The Gophers were 2-3 on the road last season, and they'll travel to Penn State, Nebraska and Wisconsin. Minnesota hasn't defeated the rival Badgers for Paul Bunyan's Axe since 2003. That's one way for Claeys to endear himself to the Gopher faithful.

Minnesota figures to be good for a bowl game and could be a wild card in the Big Ten West race, especially if they tap back into the steadiness Kill brought to the program during this decade.

5

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Oregon State	
S.10	Indiana State	
S.24	Colorado State	23-20
O.1	@PENN STATE	
O.8	Iowa	35-40
O.15	@MARYLAND	
O.22	Rutgers	
O.29	@ILLINOIS	32-23
N.5	Purdue	41-13
N.12	@NEBRASKA	25-48
N.19	Northwestern	0-27
N.26	@WISCONSIN	21-31

COACH

Tracy Claeys
Second year (2-4)
CAREER RECORD: 2-4

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jay Johnson (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jay Sawvel (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Beat Central Michigan in the Quick Lane Bowl, 21-14)
STADIUM: TCF Bank Stadium (50,805)
TICKETS: 800-U-GOPHER
SITE: Minneapolis
WEBSITE: gophersports.com
TWITTER: @GopherFootball

ILLINOIS
FIGHTING ILLINI

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

FS Taylor Barton

New Illinois athletic director Josh Whitman didn't take long to make his first bold move. On March 7, Whitman hired Lovie Smith to take over the football program after letting interim coach Bill Cubit go two days earlier.

That reinvigorated a stale football team heading into 2016. Smith is a longtime NFL coach who led the Chicago Bears to the Super Bowl in 2006. He hasn't coached at the collegiate level since 1995, so he brought University of Louisville assistant head coach Garrick McGee in as offensive coordinator and former NFL linebacker Hardy Nickerson, who had been coaching linebackers the last two seasons for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, as defensive coordinator. Smith gives the program a sense of legitimacy, but how long will it take to turn around a program that hasn't had a winning season since 2011?

Smith's starting block is Wes Lunt at quarterback. Lunt's career is a mix of efficient play and injuries, but he has compiled 34 touchdowns with just 16 interceptions during his career. Lunt played well last season despite a running game that ranked last in the Big Ten at 129.3 yards per game. Ke'Shawn Vaughn returns as the Illini's leading rusher, and he averaged 4.6 yards per carry. The offensive line must improve.

Illinois needs to generate a better pass rush after compiling 19 sacks in 2015. Defensive tackle Chunky Clements was third on the team with 11.5 tackles for loss last season. He's disruptive, but the back seven lacks experience. Senior free safety Taylor Barton, who led the Illini with four interceptions, is a team leader Smith and Nickerson can build around.

Smith inherits a team that finished 5-7 in 2015 and didn't get to a bowl game. The Illini open with three nonconference home games, with the highlight being a rematch with North Carolina from last season. Illinois opens Big Ten play at Nebraska, the first game of a brutal road slate that that includes trips to Michigan, Wisconsin and Northwestern.

Smith won't turn Illinois into a Big Ten champion overnight, but getting back into the postseason is the first step. Picking off a few ranked Big Ten teams–the Illini have lost 18 consecutive games against ranked conference teams–is the next one. That's the gauge to measure the Illini by in Year One under Lovie.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Murray State	
S.10	North Carolina	14-48
S.17	Western Michigan	
O.1	@NEBRASKA	14-13
O.8	Purdue	48-14
O.15	@RUTGERS	
O.22	@MICHIGAN	
O.29	Minnesota	23-32
N.5	Michigan State	
N.12	@WISCONSIN	13-24
N.19	Iowa	20-29
N.26	@NORTHWESTERN	14-24

COACH

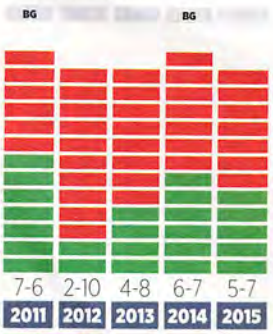
Lovie Smith
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Garrick McGee (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Hardy Nickerson (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Memorial Stadium (60,670)
TICKETS: 866-ILLINI-1
SITE: Champaign, Ill.
WEBSITE: fightingillini.com
TWITTER: @IlliniFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
24-38



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Wes Lunt (6-5, 225, Sr.)
RB	Ke'Shawn Vaughn (5-10, 205, So.)
LT	Austin Schmidt (6-6, 300, Sr.)
LG	Gabe Megginson (6-5, 300, Fr.)
C	Joe Spencer (6-4, 300, Sr.)
RG	Connor Brennan (6-5, 295, Sr.)
RT	Christian DiLauro (6-5, 300, Jr.)
TE	Andrew Davis (6-6, 230, Sr.)
WR	Dionte Taylor (6-0, 190, Sr.)
WR	Desmond Cain (5-11, 185, So.)
WR	Malik Turner (6-3, 205, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Carroll Phillips (6-3, 240, Sr.)
DT	Chunky Clements (6-3, 290, Sr.)
DT	Rob Bain (6-3, 305, Sr.)
DE	Dawuane Smoot (6-3, 265, Sr.)
LB	Mike Svetina (6-2, 235, Sr.)
LB	James Crawford (6-2, 220, Jr.)
LB	Tre Watson (6-2, 240, So.)
CB	Darius Mosely (5-11, 190, Sr.)
CB	Jaylen Dunlap (6-1, 190, Jr.)
FS	Taylor Barton (6-1, 215, Sr.)
SS	Caleb Day (6-1, 205, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	David Reisner (6-0, 195, Sr.)
P	Ryan Frain (6-2, 220, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Zarrian Holcombe,** TE ★★★
2 **Dele Harding,** LB ★★★
3 **Eli Peters,** QB ★★★

It was a tough year on the trail for the Illini as they once again saw many of the state's best head elsewhere as this 25-player class finished No. 71 nationally and No. 12 in the Big Ten per the 247Sports rankings. Only two players hail from in-state.

BARTON: MICHAEL CONROY / AP

PURDUE
BOILERMAKERS

5-YEAR RECORD
19-43

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB Markell Jones

Purdue coach Darrell Hazell knows where the writing is located heading into his fourth season with the Boilermakers. Purdue is 6-30 the last three years, including a 2-22 mark in Big Ten conference play.

That's why Hazell revamped the coaching staff over the winter. If the Boilermakers don't show progress this season, especially in conference play, Hazell may be looking for a new job.

Five assistant coaches were let go, including both coordinators. Tight ends coach Terry Malone was promoted to offensive coordinator, and former Nebraska high school coach Ross Els is the new defensive coordinator. Last year, Purdue ranked 11th in the Big Ten in total offense and 12th in total defense. Progress on both sides of the ball–particularly on the interior lines–needs to happen quickly in order for a turnaround to be possible.

Leading rusher Markell Jones (875 yards) averaged 5.2 yards per carry with 10 TDs for a stop-and-start rushing attack that didn't have enough punch last season. Jones put those numbers up as a freshman, so he should make a strong run at 1,000 yards this year.

The quarterback competition is a major storyline that could spill over into fall camp. Austin Appleby transferred to Florida in the offseason, so David Blough will battle with redshirt freshman Elijah Sindelar for the starting job. Leading receiver DeAngelo Yancey also returns.

Purdue has experience up front on the defensive line with three seniors in Evan Panfil, Jake Replogle and Ra'Zahn Howard. Panfil tied for the team lead with four sacks last season. Replogle has led the Boilermakers in tackles for loss each of the last two seasons. Linebacker Danny Ezechukwu and safety Leroy Clark were the Boilermakers' top two leading tacklers in 2015 and should help shore up the back seven. This unit must get more pressure on the quarterback.

Purdue welcomes Cincinnati and Nevada in for nonconference play in September and avoids the top three teams in the Big Ten East in crossover games. The conference home schedule features Iowa, Northwestern, Penn State and Wisconsin. The Boilermakers scored a rare conference win against Nebraska last season, something that will be on the Huskers' minds in Lincoln on Oct. 22.

The Boilermakers' path to a bowl game lies in beating a few ranked teams. Purdue is 0-10 and has been outscored 357-155 under Hazell in such games. If Hazell can't lead the Boilermakers to six wins, then Purdue might be looking for a new coach in December.

7

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	David Blough (6-1, 205, So.)
RB	Markell Jones (5-11, 211, So.)
LT	Martesse Patterson (6-3, 340, So.)
LG	Jason King (6-4, 310, Sr.)
C	Kirk Barron (6-2, 310, So.)
RG	Jordan Roos (6-4, 301, Sr.)
RT	Cameron Cermin (6-5, 310, Sr.)
TE	Cole Herdman (6-4, 238, So.)
WR	Domonique Young (6-3, 210, Sr.)
WR	DeAngelo Yancey (6-2, 216, Sr.)
WR	Gregory Phillips (6-0, 196, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Evan Panfil (6-5, 268, Sr.)
DT	Jake Replogle (6-5, 294, Sr.)
NT	Ra'Zahn Howard (6-3, 325, Sr.)
DE	Gelen Robinson (6-1, 265, Jr.)
LB	Danny Ezechukwu (6-2, 251, Jr.)
LB	Jimmy Herman (6-4, 230, Sr.)
LB	Ja'Whaun Bentley (6-2, 250, Jr.)
CB	Da'Wan Hunte (5-9, 188, Jr.)
CB	David Rose (6-0, 186, Fr.)
S	Robert Gregory (6-1, 231, Sr.)
S	Leroy Clark (5-10, 197, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	JD Dellinger (6-2, 175, Fr.)
P	Joe Schopper (6-0, 193, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Rob Simmons,** LB ★★★
2 **Austin Larkin,** DE ★★★
3 **Terrance Landers,** WR ★★★

The Boilermakers' 23-player class is one of the worst in Power Five football, as the Purdue staff settled for winning recruiting battles against mid-majors instead of trying to go head-to-head against its peers. The group ranks No. 76 nationally and last in the Big Ten. The Boilers signed only two prospects from Indiana, and both had just one other offer.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Eastern Kentucky	
S.10	Cincinnati	
S.24	Nevada	
O.1	@MARYLAND	
O.8	@ILLINOIS	14-48
O.15	Iowa	20-40
O.22	@NEBRASKA	55-45
O.29	Penn State	
N.5	@MINNESOTA	13-41
N.12	Northwestern	14-21
N.19	Wisconsin	7-24
N.26	@INDIANA	36-54

COACH

Darrell Hazell
Fourth year (6-30)
CAREER RECORD: 22-40

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Terry Malone (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Ross Els (first year)
Marcus Freeman (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 2-10
STADIUM: Ross-Ade Stadium (57,236)
TICKETS: 800-497-7678
SITE: West Lafayette, Ind.
WEBSITE: purduesports.com
TWITTER: @BoilerFootball

JONES: CARLOS OSORIO / AP

PROJECTED FINISH

1. **Oklahoma**
   BOWL PROJECTION: CFP Semifinal (Fiesta Bowl)
2. **Baylor**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Sugar Bowl
3. **Oklahoma State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Alamo Bowl
4. **Texas**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Russell Athletic Bowl
5. **TCU**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Texas Bowl
6. **West Virginia**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Liberty Bowl
7. **Texas Tech**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cactus Bowl
8. **Kansas State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Armed Forces Bowl
9. **Iowa State**
10. **Kansas**

Mike Warren, RB, Iowa State

Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma

With Heisman candidate Mayfield running the show, Stoops' Sooners have the look of CFP success

BY BLAIR KERKHOFF
Kansas City Star

Oklahoma gave the Big 12 what it so desperately sought last season: an entry in the College Football Playoff. After getting shut out of the inaugural year of college football's final four, the conference felt the pressure.

But questions for the league remain.

Should it expand and, if so, are there candidates outside of the existing Power Five structure that bring value?

The Big 12 doesn't need to have a dozen members to hold a football conference championship game anymore. The NCAA ruled on that earlier this year. But should the Big 12 consider holding one no matter its membership total?

These are questions the Big 12 will take into the summer and the 2016 football season as it charts its future.

The Sooners' spot in the bracket was important for this reason: The conference can maintain the status quo and, if it includes a team worthy of the playoff, it will be included. That didn't happen two years ago when Baylor and TCU tied for first and neither got in the playoff.

As for the competition, the Sooners' championship brought a sense of relief in Norman. The previous season was uncharacteristically poor and Oklahoma landed outside the Top 25. In 2015, OU won its first outright conference championship since 2010, riding the spirited play of quarterback Baker Mayfield, and stands with Baylor as a favorite for this season.

The Bears looked like the Big 12's top team for several weeks last year, but a season-ending injury to quarterback Seth Russell changed the trajectory. Russell is back and Baylor, the conference winner in 2013 and 2014, should be in the thick of things once again.

Oklahoma State could come off the projection pace, and Texas and TCU are favored to fill out the league's upper half. The Horned Frogs are replacing quarterback Trevone Boykin.

The Big 12 welcomes one new coach. Matt Campbell has arrived from Toledo with the objective of returning Iowa State to bowl eligibility. It has been four years since the Cyclones have appeared in the postseason.

MAYFIELD: SUE OGROCKI / AP; WARREN: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **New blood:** The coaches' all-conference team included 30 players. Twenty-five have moved on, so look for new stars to emerge this season.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Brian Perroni, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Texas	24	0	13	11	263.40
2	Baylor	22	0	8	14	241.41
3	Oklahoma	20	1	8	10	233.90
4	TCU	22	0	8	14	228.88
5	West Virginia	27	0	3	21	193.85
6	Oklahoma State	21	0	1	20	182.85
7	Texas Tech	25	0	2	23	182.46
8	Iowa State	29	0	0	26	172.90
9	Kansas State	20	0	0	15	151.39
10	Kansas	18	0	0	14	135.71

ALL-BIG XII

OFFENSE

QB Baker Mayfield, Sr., Oklahoma
RB Mike Warren, So., Iowa State
RB Samaje Perine, Jr., Oklahoma
OL Kyle Fuller, Sr., Baylor
OL Tyler Orlosky, Sr., West Virginia
OL Orlando Brown, So., Oklahoma
OL Connor Williams, So., Texas
OL Patrick Vahe, So., Texas
TE Blake Jarwin, Sr., Oklahoma State
WR KD Cannon, Jr., Baylor
WR James Washington, Jr., Oklahoma State

DEFENSE

DL James McFarland, Sr., TCU
DL Josh Carraway, Sr., TCU
DL Charles Walker, Jr., Oklahoma
DL Will Geary, Jr., Kansas State
LB Elijah Lee, Jr., Kansas State
LB Malik Jefferson, So., Texas
LB Jordan Burton, Sr., Oklahoma State
DB Jordan Thomas, Jr., Oklahoma
DB Dante Barnett, Sr., Kansas State
DB Jordan Sterns, Sr., Oklahoma State
DB Fish Smithson, Sr., Kansas

SPECIALISTS

K Josh Lambert, Sr., West Virginia
P Austin Seibert, So., Oklahoma

NEWSMAKER

Texas offensive coordinator **Sterlin Gilbert** initially turned down the Longhorns' offer. But a delegation led by coach Charlie Strong flew to Tulsa and convinced Gilbert to take the job and remake the Texas offense. Matt Mattox will join Gilbert as offensive line coach and running game coordinator. The pressure is on to deliver a better offensive product in Austin.

OVERRATED

TEXAS

This is a standing position. Because of the Longhorns' historical power status and intense media coverage, expectations are often higher than the reality. Texas should be improved this season, but not enough to challenge for the top.

UNDERRATED

TCU

Never count the Horned Frogs out of a championship race, plus coach Gary Patterson has extra incentive. The school erected a statue of Patterson on campus. "Obviously, we don't feel like we're done," Patterson said at the unveiling.

2 Backloaded schedule: The Big 12 has a knack for building to a dramatic finish and that should be the case again this season. Two of the final four weeks include Oklahoma's games with Baylor and Oklahoma State.

3 Return of the RB: The league boasts several good ones—Oklahoma's Samaje Perine and Joe Mixon, Baylor's Shock Linwood and Iowa State's Mike Warren.

RATING THE BIG XII

FASTEST RECEIVER
KD Cannon, Baylor
That's KD "as if shot from a" Cannon to you, sir.

BEST HANDS
James Washington, WR, Oklahoma State
His tennis background gives him great hand-eye coordination. Washington was an All-Region net star at Stamford (Texas) High and made the state quarterfinals in doubles.

BEST PASSING QB
Baker Mayfield, Oklahoma
A dual threat with a strong arm.

BEST RUNNING QB
Skyler Howard, West Virginia
Howard played some running back at FCS Stephen F. Austin.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Samaje Perine, Oklahoma
Not only elusive, but he's also best after contact.

BEST ATHLETE
Patrick Mahomes II, QB, Texas Tech
Gave up baseball to play spring football.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma
His play in the victory at Baylor was last season's top pressure performance.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Samaje Perine, RB, Oklahoma
Powerful 234-pound frame has 3,062 career rushing yards in two seasons at OU.

TOP FRESHMAN
Erick Fowler, LB, Texas
Flipped from LSU to Texas on National Signing Day.

TOP TRANSFER
Kenny Hill, QB, TCU
Passed for 23 touchdowns for Texas A&M in 2014

HARDEST HITTER
Jason Hall, S, Texas
Takes baton from West Virginia safety Karl Joseph.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Baker Mayfield, QB, Oklahoma
Had to talk his way onto Sooners' roster. Then delivered.

BEST INTERVIEW
David Boren, president, University of Oklahoma
Moves the needle more than anybody in the conference.

BEST COACH
Bob Stoops, Oklahoma
Reigning champion gets the nod.

COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Sterlin Gilbert, Texas
Gilbert's offensive systems have worked everywhere else, but this is a major step up in class.

TOP SCHOLAR
Brad Lundblade, OL, Oklahoma State
First line on bio page is "intelligent."

LOUDEST STADIUM
Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium, Oklahoma
And will get louder with South end zone bowled in.

Gaylord Family Oklahoma Memorial Stadium

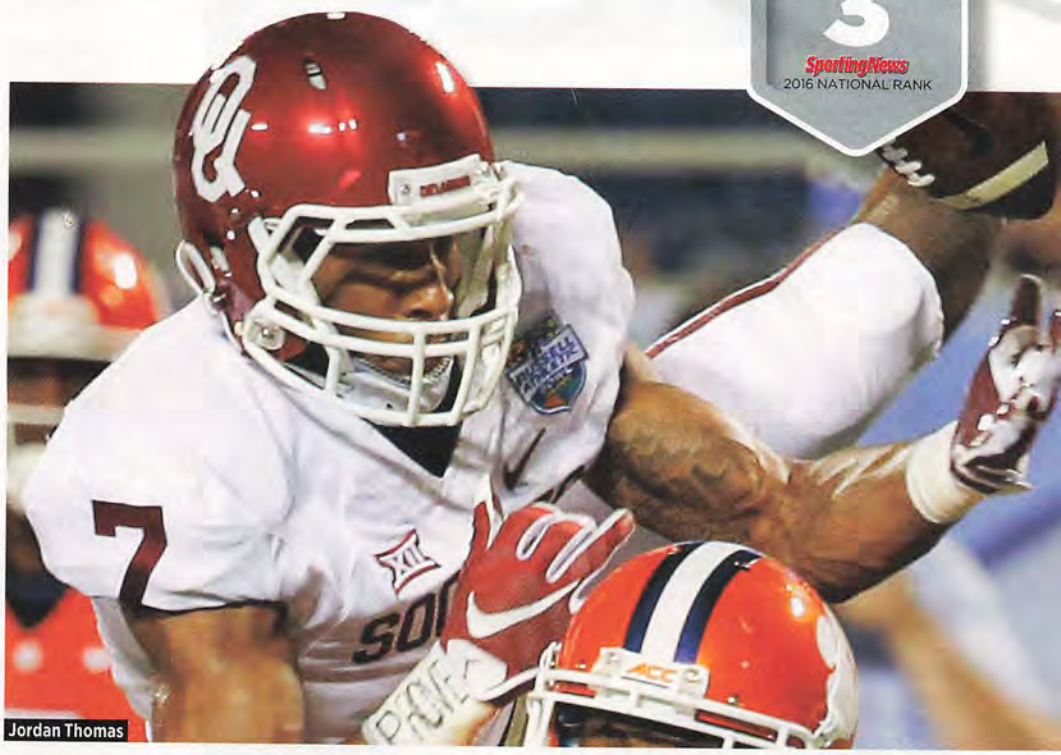
STADIUM: SUE OGROCKI / AP; CANNON: CHARLIE RIEDEL / AP

OKLAHOMA
SOONERS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

3
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK


Jordan Thomas

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@HOUSTON*	
S.10	Louisiana-Monroe	
S.17	Ohio State	
O.1	@TCU	30-29
O.8	Texas**	17-24
O.15	Kansas State	55-0
O.22	@TEXAS TECH	63-27
O.29	Kansas	62-7
N.3	@IOWA STATE	52-16
N.12	Baylor	44-34
N.19	@WEST VIRGINIA	44-24
D.3	Oklahoma State	58-23

*At NRG Stadium
**At Dallas, TX

COACH

Bob Stoops
18th year (179-46)
CAREER RECORD: 179-46
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Lincoln Riley (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Stoops (10th year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-2
(Lost to Clemson in the Orange Bowl, 37-17)
STADIUM: Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium (82,112)
TICKETS: 800-456-GoOU
SITE: Norman, Okla.
WEBSITE: soonersports.com
TWITTER: @OU_Football

Seven years earlier in the same stadium, Oklahoma was tied with Tim Tebow's Florida team at halftime and angry that points had been left on the field and not on the scoreboard, points that became critical as the Gators went on to win the national championship.

On this night in the Orange Bowl, which served as the national semifinal, the Sooners actually led Clemson by one point at halftime. But this time it was Oklahoma's opponent that had squandered points and opportunities. And the Tigers roared to a huge second half on their way to a 20-point victory.

The season ended in a crushing defeat, and that Clemson proved superior on both sides of the line was troubling. But an outright Big 12 championship, the first for Oklahoma since 2010, after a 5-4 conference season in 2014, brought some swagger back to the program.

A perfect league record was marred only by a loss to Texas, providing perhaps the strongest evidence to date that any team can win the Red River Rivalry.

Oklahoma picked up victories at Baylor and Oklahoma State, teams that defeated the Sooners in Norman the year before. The feel-good triumph of the season occurred in the second week when Oklahoma overcame a 17-point deficit to win at Tennessee in double overtime. "One of the more special wins, maybe my favorite of all of them," coach Bob Stoops said after the game.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

CB **Jordan Thomas**

Everyone across the country is well aware of the significance that QB Baker Mayfield represents for Oklahoma and that's all the more reason cornerback Jordan Thomas will be the difference-maker in 2016. Experts argue that Thomas is better than his departed counterpart, Zack Sanchez, who was one of the Big 12's best shutdown cornerbacks. Thomas finished 2015 with five interceptions and 46 tackles despite being suspended for the first quarter against Akron and the entire game against Tulsa for unspecified disciplinary reasons. The 6-0, 187-pound native of Klein, Texas, will have to use all of his explosive speed and field vision as Oklahoma faces a schedule full of skilled passers in 2016.

Winning the Big 12 also proved special. Since beating Nebraska in the final Big 12 Championship Game in 2010, the Sooners' lone-first place finish was a tie with Kansas State in 2012 and the Wildcats won the regular-season meeting.

THOMAS: JOHN RAOUX / AP

Baylor, TCU, Oklahoma State and K-State had taken turns elbowing their way past Oklahoma in a season. And, yes, Stoops was starting to hear about it. Never mind that he has become the winningest coach in program history and nobody in college football history had won more games than Stoops (179) in his first 17 seasons as a head coach.

Fans hadn't seen a serious thrust at a national championship since that Florida game, and Oklahoma plays to win titles.

That's why, despite not playing in the College Football Playoff title game, the 2015 season was and should be seen as an accomplishment and the Sooners are set up nicely to make another run at the playoffs because quarterback Baker Mayfield returns.

Mayfield turned in one of the greatest seasons by a Sooners quarterback, passing for 3,700 yards and earning first-team all-conference honors. His path to Norman was not the usual one.

As a prospect from Lake Travis High in Austin, Texas, Mayfield was deemed too small at 6-1 to make an impact at a Power Five program. He wound up walking on at Texas Tech and won the starting role as a walk-on, although injuries limited him to seven starts. But he wasn't happy and sought a transfer after the season.

Oklahoma was coming off the Sugar Bowl victory over Alabama when Mayfield enrolled. He had to sit out the 2014 season but competed and won the job last fall and delivered a conference championship season.

"He's leaned up, gained strength and quickness," Stoops says.

The Sooners return their top running backs, Samaje Perine and Joe Mixon, which gives Oklahoma one of the nation's top backfields. At wide receiver, All-American Sterling Shepard has moved on to the NFL, and Stoops said during the spring that Mark Andrews will have a bigger role in the offense this season.

Jordan Evans is the lone returning linebacker, and that qualifies as the position with the biggest questions. Evans didn't play in the spring after suffering a shoulder injury in the Orange Bowl. Obo Okoronkwo and Tay Evans could make an impact at the other linebacking spots.

Look for a backup from last season to be among the Sooners' top defensive linemen. End Charles Walker finished third on the team in sacks and tied for second in tackles for loss. He'll play for a new defensive line coach, Calvin Thibodeaux, who played for the Sooners from 2002-06 and was hired away from Kansas.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Sooners did not sign a huge class at only 19 prospects, but there are some serious potential difference-makers. Bob Stoops once again went to California and landed a five-star in linebacker Caleb Kelly. Four-star quarterback Austin Kendall arrived early to go through spring ball as did U.S. Army All-America defensive back Chanse Sylvie. The class has several junior-college transfers who will likely be counted on to provide immediate help at some positons of need (linebacker, offensive line). With this recruiting class, Oklahoma is starting to get back to its roots of recruiting the state of Texas.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Caleb Kelly,** OLB ★★★★★
2. **Amani Bledsoe,** DE ★★★★
3. **Jordan Parker,** CB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Baker Mayfield

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	173.3	269-395-7	68.1	3700	36	284.6

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Samaje Perine	13	226	1349	6.0	16	103.8

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Dede Westbrook	13	46	743	16.2	4	57.2

TACKLES

	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jordan Evans	11	49	34	83

SACKS

	GP	No.	Yards
Charles Walker	12	6.0	33

INTERCEPTIONS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jordan Thomas	5	153	30.6	1

TEAM TRADITION

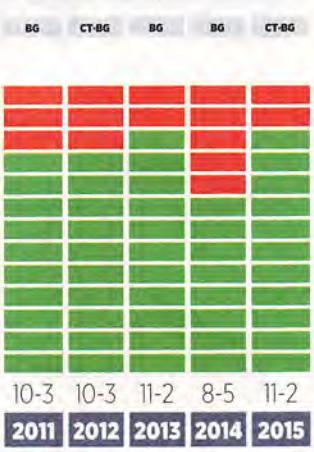
In the shadows on the east side of Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium sits one of the greatest tributes in college football. Oklahoma's Heisman Memorial Park honors the five Sooners to bring home the coveted trophy with bronze statues of each standing at least 10 feet tall. The five Heisman winners are Billy Vessels (1952), Steve Owens (1969), Billy Sims (1978), Jason White (2003) and Sam Bradford (2008).

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OKLA	OPP
SCORING	566	286
Points Per Game	43.5	22.0
FIRST DOWNS	352	265
Rushing	143	118
Passing	180	119
Penalty	29	28
RUSHING YARDAGE	2887	2102
Yards gained rushing	3244	2467
Yards lost rushing	357	365
Rushing Attempts	574	552
Average Per Rush	5.0	3.8
Average Per Game	222.1	161.7
TDs Rushing	32	15
PASSING YARDAGE	4006	2636
Comp-Att-Int	292-439-9	230-437-20
Average Per Pass	9.1	6.0
Average Per Catch	13.7	11.5
Average Per Game	308.2	202.8
TDs Passing	38	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	6893	4738
Total Plays	1013	989
Average Per Play	6.8	4.8
Average Per Game	530.2	364.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	33-708	50-1073
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	22-165	11-12
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	20-317	9-70
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.5	21.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	7.5	1.1
INT RETURN AVG.	15.9	7.8
FUMBLES-LOST	15-9	11-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	80-800	77-681
Average Per Game	61.5	52.4
PUNTS-YARDS	57-2395	91-3898
Average Per Punt	42.0	42.8
Net punt average	41.1	40.4
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:42	29:18
3RD-DOWN CONV.	79/181	93/230
3rd-Down Pct.	44%	40%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	9/17	6/14
4th-Down Pct.	53%	43%
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-243	41-216
MISC. YARDS	35	0
TDS SCORED	73	34
FG-ATTEMPTS	19-24	17-22
ATTENDANCE	512139	290105
Games/Avg Per Game	6/85356	5/58021
Neutral Site Games		2/79580

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
OKLAHOMA	132	172	148	100	14	566
Opponent	59	95	74	51	7	286

5-YEAR RECORD 50-15



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Baker Mayfield** (6-1, 212, Sr.)
	Austin Kendall (6-1, 206, Fr.)
RB	**Samaje Perine** (5-10, 234, Jr.)
	Joe Mixon (6-1, 226, So.)
LT	**Orlando Brown** (6-8, 357, So.)
	Bobby Evans (6-4, 299, Fr.)
LG	**Cody Ford** (6-3, 317, Fr.)
	Ashton Julious (6-5, 354, Jr.)
C	**Jonathan Alvarez** (6-3, 315, Jr.)
	Alex Dalton (6-3, 290, So.)
RG	**Jamal Danley** (6-3, 323, Sr.)
	Ben Powers (6-4, 320, So.)
RT	**Dru Samia** (6-4, 274, So.)
	Quinn Mittermeier (6-5, 265, So.)
WR	**Mark Andrews** (6-5, 244, So.)
	Michiah Quick (5-11, 183, Jr.)
WR	**Jarvis Baxter** (5-11, 165, Sr.)
	Dahu Green (6-4, 201, So.)
WR	**Geno Lewis** (6-1, 201, Sr.)
	A.D. Miller (6-3, 189, So.)
WR	**Dede Westbrook** (6-0, 170, Sr.)
	Jeffery Mead (6-5, 187, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Charles Walker** (6-2, 299, Jr.)
	Austin Roberts (6-6, 279, Sr.)
DT	**Matt Romar** (6-0, 298, Jr.)
	Jordan Wade (6-3, 311, Sr.)
DE	**Matt Dimon** (6-2, 265, Sr.)
	D.J. Ward (6-2, 250, Jr.)
LB	**Obo Okoronkwo** (6-2, 238, Jr.)
	Caleb Kelly (6-3, 225, Fr.)
LB	**Jordan Evans** (6-2, 233, Sr.)
	Arthur McGinnis (6-1, 248, Fr.)
LB	**Tay Evans** (6-2, 239, So.)
	Curtis Bolton (6-0, 232, So.)
CB	**Jordan Thomas** (6-0, 187, Jr.)
	Dakota Austin (5-10, 159, Sr.)
CB	**P.J. Mbanasor** (6-1, 189, So.)
	Dakota Austin (5-10, 159, Sr.)
FS	**Ahmad Thomas** (6-0, 199, Sr.)
	Kahlil Haughton (6-1, 195, So.)
SS	**Steven Parker** (6-1, 208, Jr.)
	Will Sunderland (6-2, 197, So.)
NB	**William Johnson** (6-0, 185, Jr.)
	Prentice McKinney (6-1, 181, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Austin Seibert** (5-10, 214, So.)
P	**Austin Seibert** (5-10, 214, So.)

Sporting News All-American

BAYLOR
BEARS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

5
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Seth Russell

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Northwestern State	
S.10	SMU	56-21
S.17	@RICE	70-17
S.24	Oklahoma State	45-35
O.1	@IOWA STATE	45-27
O.15	Kansas	66-7
O.29	@TEXAS	17-23
N.5	TCU	21-28
N.12	@OKLAHOMA	34-44
N.19	Kansas State	31-24
N.25	Texas Tech*	63-35
D.3	@WEST VIRGINIA	62-38

At Arlington, TX

COACH

Art Briles
Ninth year (65-37)
CAREER RECORD: 99-65

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kendal Briles (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Phil Bennett (sixth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat North Carolina in the Russell Athletic Bowl, 49-38)
STADIUM: McLane Stadium (45,140)
TICKETS: 254-710-1000
SITE: Waco, Texas
WEBSITE: baylorbears.com
TWITTER: @BUFootball

The more you think about it, the more amazing Baylor's bowl victory over North Carolina seems.

For starters, neither side was filled with motivation. The Tar Heels had lost a close ACC title game battle with Clemson, and the Bears fell short of the Big 12 championship for the first time in three years.

And Baylor came into the Russell Athletic Bowl without its top two quarterbacks, top running back and one of the nation's best wide receivers. Even the high-octane Bears figured to be slowed by the depleted ranks.

Nope. Baylor rolled up 49 points in an 11-point victory and set a bowl game record with 645 rushing yards among its 756 yards of total offense. Next man up was never more meaningful than it was for the Bears that night.

Those injured quarterbacks, Seth Russell and Jarrett Stidham, are set to return, with Russell being the incumbent.

Russell suffered a broken C6 vertebrae in his neck during a midseason victory over Iowa State. Stidham missed the final three and a half games with a broken bone in his right ankle.

Russell was on his way to an amazing statistical season with 2,104 yards and 29 touchdowns when he was hurt. He was coming off a five-touchdown game against West Virginia and the nation's top offense, averaging 686 yards and 61 points at the time, was humming.

It didn't lose much with Stidham. But Baylor lost its first game after an 8-0 start at home to Oklahoma and the attack slowed in successive losses to TCU and Texas to close the regular season.

Coach Art Briles expects the Bears to pick up where they left off in the postseason.

"Seth did a great job until the injury and I thought Stidham was unbelievable," Briles says. "We've got two guys that are really good, really experienced."

Russell had worked two seasons as a reserve before earning the starting spot. Devastating as the injury was, he realized his

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Seth Russell**

Russell returns after starting seven games for Baylor last season and will have to find a new favorite target as star wideout Corey Coleman departed for the NFL. Russell threw for 2,104 yards on 200 attempts while compiling 29 touchdowns and just six picks before going down in October with season-ending neck surgery. The 6-3, 220-pound senior was cleared to return to team activities at the end of February. The Bears are hopeful Russell will be 100 percent so Baylor can put its best foot forward for a fourth consecutive 10-win season.

RUSSELL: ROD AYDELOTTE / AP

fortune soon afterwards.

"I was about two millimeters away from not walking," Russell says of the placement of the fracture. "The surgery went perfect."

It better have. Joshua Russell, Seth's brother, is an orthopedic surgeon who directed Seth to a specialist for the procedure. While in the hospital, Russell received an outpouring of support, including handwritten notes from TCU coach Gary Patterson and Kansas State coach Bill Snyder.

Quarterback is a solid position for Baylor, but replacements are on tap elsewhere. Gone is Biletnikoff Award-winning wide receiver Corey Coleman, the latest in the assembly line of Baylor speedsters on the outside. Coleman missed the bowl game but caught 20 touchdown passes last season. Back, however, is KD Cannon, who hauled in 50 receptions and six touchdowns.

Senior running back Shock Linwood, who rushed for 1,329 yards last season, is knocking on the door of the school's career rushing record. There's competition here with junior Johnny Jefferson, who's coming off a 299-yard performance in the bowl game that earned him MVP honors. The output gave Jefferson precisely 1,000 yards for the season and he was third in the FBS at 7.35 yards per carry.

Baylor started turning the corner under Briles during the Robert Griffin III days, but the Bears have sustained their championship-level play because they've developed depth. That will be tested on the offensive line this season as four starters, including All-America left tackle Spencer Drango, must be replaced.

The offensive line was tremendous last season, and it should continue to be good building around second-team All-Big 12 center Kyle Fuller.

Replacements must also be found on the defensive line, which lost NFL-caliber talents Shawn Oakman and Andrew Billings. Returning veterans like tackle Byron Bonds and ends K.J. Smith and Brian Nance should make a difference, along with Junior College All-America tackle Jeremy Faulk.

Perhaps the biggest question mark on defense is at cornerback. Ryan Reid holds down one side, but Baylor has to fill the hole left by Xavien Howard.

Look for linebacker Aiavion Edwards to make a name for himself. He has had seven career starts but came up with 17 tackles, a sack and forced fumble in the bowl game.

Yes, another star from a bowl game that produced many.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Coach Art Briles and his staff have excelled on the field the past few seasons and now they are recruiting with the top teams in Texas. That should be a scary proposition for other Big 12 programs. Patrick Hudson is a massive human being (6-4, 325 pounds) and the one-time Texas A&M commit should earn early playing time. Devin Duvernay has all kinds of speed at receiver, while fellow wideout Tren Dickson set national records in high school. There are some solid defenders in the class as well, but it might take a few more classes like this one to rebuild that side of the ball.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Devin Duvernay,** WR ★★★★
2. **Patrick Hudson,** OG ★★★★
3. **Tren Dickson,** WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Seth Russell

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
7	189.7	119-200-6	59.5	2104	29	300.6

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Shock Linwood	12	196	1329	6.8	10	110.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
KD Cannon	13	50	868	17.4	6	66.8

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Travon Blanchard	13	65	18	83

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Taylor Young	12	3.0	17

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Ryan Reid	3	-1	-0.3	0

TEAM TRADITION

The "Baylor Line" is made up entirely of freshmen and embodies the spirit of Baylor tradition. Students wear a gold football jersey with the number of the year of expected graduation and a nickname on the back, and they wait for the signal to make a "mad dash" down the field to create a giant human tunnel for the team to run through as they enter the field before every home game.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	BAY	OPP
SCORING	625	368
Points Per Game	48.1	28.3
FIRST DOWNS	383	274
Rushing	220	119
Passing	144	126
Penalty	19	29
RUSHING YARDAGE	4247	2120
Yards gained rushing	4475	2502
Yards lost rushing	228	382
Rushing Attempts	714	552
Average Per Rush	5.9	3.8
Average Per Game	326.7	163.1
TDs Rushing	41	17
PASSING YARDAGE	3764	3035
Comp-Att-Int	229-389-13	255-442-14
Average Per Pass	9.7	6.9
Average Per Catch	16.4	11.9
Average Per Game	289.5	233.5
TDs Passing	44	30
TOTAL OFFENSE	8011	5155
Total Plays	1103	994
Average Per Play	7.3	5.2
Average Per Game	616.2	396.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	30-675	61-1406
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-64	8-28
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	14-137	13-187
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.5	23.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	4.3	3.5
INT RETURN AVG.	9.8	14.4
FUMBLES-LOST	22-13	24-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	118-1043	101-835
Average Per Game	80.2	64.2
PUNTS-YARDS	42-1684	83-3257
Average Per Punt	40.1	39.2
Net punt average	39.4	38.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	27:51	32:09
3RD-DOWN CONV.	91/194	74/201
3rd-Down Pct.	47%	37%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	28/40	9/23
4th-Down Pct.	70%	39%
SACKS BY-YARDS	30-214	15-86
MISC. YARDS	30	0
TDS SCORED	86	49
FG-ATTEMPTS	8-14	9-12
ATTENDANCE	276960	216409
Games/Avg Per Game	6/46160	5/43282
Neutral Site Games		2/48298

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
BAYLOR	214	154	150	100	7	625
Opponent	118	78	69	89	14	368

5-YEAR RECORD 50-15

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Seth Russell** (6-3, 220, Sr.)
	Jarrett Stidham (6-3, 210, So.)
RB	**Shock Linwood** (5-9, 200, Sr.)
	J. Jefferson (5-10, 205, Jr.)
LT	**Dom Desouza** (6-6, 295, Jr.)
	Ishmael Wilson (6-4, 305, Jr.)
LG	**Blake Blackmar** (6-5, 345, So.)
	B.J. Autry (6-4, 350, Jr.)
C	**Kyle Fuller** (6-5, 310, Sr.)
	Blake Blackmar (6-5, 345, So.)
RG	**Rami Hammad** (6-4, 340, Jr.)
	Tanner Thrift (6-5, 305, Jr.)
RT	**Patrick Lawrence** (6-6, 310, So.)
	Mo Porter (6-5, 310, Jr.)
TE	**J. Feuerbacher** (6-4, 255, Jr.)
	Sam Tecklenburg (6-3, 270, Fr.)
WR	**Lynx Hawthorne** (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	Tren Dickson (5-11, 180, Fr.)
WR	**Ishmael Zamora** (6-4, 220, So.)
	Pooh Stricklin (6-2, 185, Fr.)
WR	**KD Cannon** (6-0, 180, Jr.)
	Quan Jones (6-5, 220, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**K.J. Smith** (6-2, 265, Jr.)
	Jamie Jacobs (6-5, 255, So.)
DT	**Byron Bonds** (6-2, 290, Sr.)
	Tyrone Hunt (6-5, 280, Fr.)
NT	**Jeremy Faulk** (6-2, 295, Jr.)
	Ira Lewis (6-3, 300, So.)
DE	**Brian Nance** (6-3, 245, Jr.)
	Greg Roberts (6-6, 260, So.)
WLB	**Taylor Young** (5-10, 225, Jr.)
	Clay Johnston (6-3, 220, Fr.)
MLB	**Aiavion Edwards** (6-1, 230, Sr.)
	Raaquan Davis (6-2, 225, Jr.)
NB	**Travon Blanchard** (6-2, 210, Jr.)
	Patrick Levels (5-11, 195, Sr.)
CB	**Jameson Houston** (6-2, 200, Fr.)
	Verkedric Vaughns (5-10, 195, So.)
CB	**Ryan Reid** (5-11, 190, Sr.)
	Tion Wright (5-10, 180, Sr.)
DS	**Orion Stewart** (6-2, 205, Sr.)
	Davion Hall (6-2, 205, Jr.)
CS	**Chance Waz** (6-0, 185, Jr.)
	Taion Sells (5-10, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

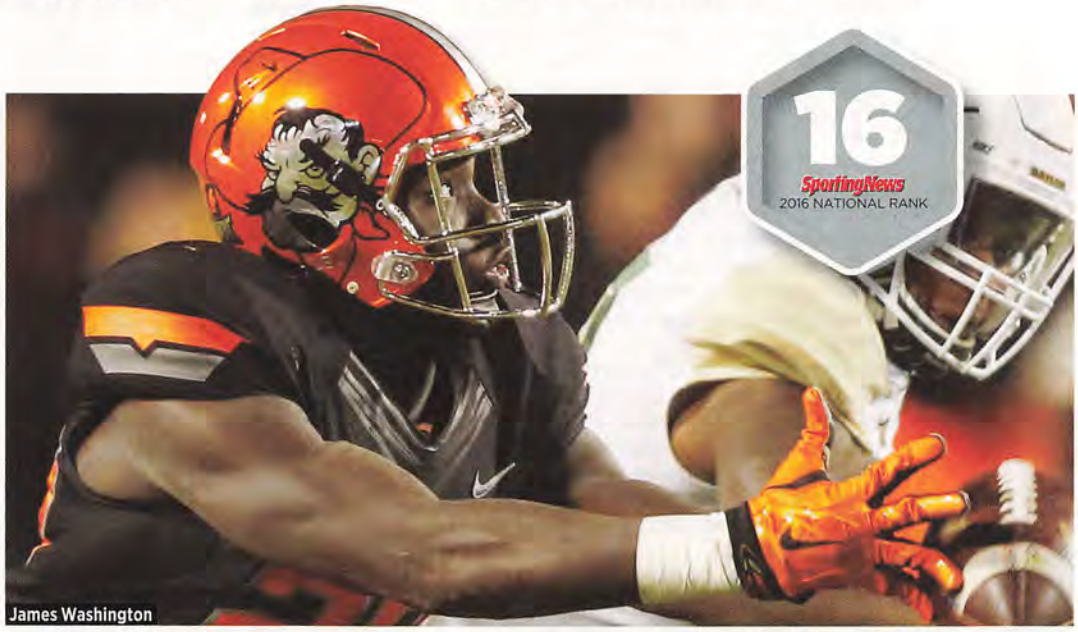
K	**Chris Callahan** (5-9, 205, Jr.)
P	**Drew Galitz** (6-0, 205, So.)

Sporting News All-American

OKLAHOMA STATE
COWBOYS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH



James Washington

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Southeastern Louisiana	
S.10	Central Michigan	24-13
S.17	Pittsburgh	
S.24	@BAYLOR	35-45
O.1	Texas	30-27
O.8	Iowa State	35-31
O.22	@KANSAS	58-10
O.29	West Virginia	33-26
N.5	@KANSAS STATE	36-34
N.12	Texas Tech	70-53
N.19	@TCU	49-29
D.3	@OKLAHOMA	23-58

COACH

Mike Gundy
12th year (94-47)
CAREER RECORD: 94-47

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Mike Yurcich (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Glenn Spencer (sixth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Ole Miss in the Sugar Bowl, 48-20)
STADIUM: Boone Pickens Stadium (60,218)
TICKETS: 877-ALL-4-OSU
SITE: Stillwater, Okla.
WEBSITE: okstate.com
TWITTER: @CowboyFB

Oklahoma State improved to 10-0 and jumped to sixth in the College Football Playoff rankings in the middle of last November, but there was some lingering doubt about the Cowboys, who were just hitting the teeth of their schedule.

Losses in the final regular-season games to Baylor and Oklahoma confirmed the uncertainty, and Oklahoma State went on to lose the Sugar Bowl to Ole Miss.

But it is wiser to look at Oklahoma State's prospects this season through the lens of the 10 victories rather than the three defeats.

This could be a special Cowboys team that should compete for the Big 12 title.

It begins with quarterback Mason Rudolph, who is coming off a sophomore season in which he passed for 3,770 yards and 21 touchdowns in a platoon situation with J.W. Walsh. Walsh was the Cowboys' goal-line and short-yardage guy, and the pair combined to give Oklahoma State one of the Big 12's top attacks.

Rudolph's 14.28 yards-per-completion average is the most by a returning Division 1 quarterback with at least 2,500 passing yards in 2015.

Considering all that, quarterback should return to a solo act in Stillwater, and coach Mike Gundy has faith in Rudolph, who recovered fully from late November foot surgery in time for spring practice.

"He's always been a good leader," Gundy says. "He's a tough guy and the players respect him for that reason. He just continues to develop."

The Cowboys will give their quarterbacks the luxury of one of the nation's top receiving corps. James Washington is the Big 12's only returning 1,000-yard receiver. Marcell Ateman emerged last season as a junior with 45 receptions for 766 yards.

The starting offensive line returns intact. Led by tackles Zachary Crabtree and Victor Salako, the Cowboys have a combined 97 career starts up front. If you add Salako's 23 career starts for his former school, UAB, the number jumps to 120.

But improvement is needed here. Over the past two seasons, the Cowboys have

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

WR **James Washington**

No other Big 12 team returns as much experience on offense as the Cowboys, who are expecting big things from this second-team All-Big 12 wideout in 2016. The 6-0, 205-pound junior exploded onto the national scene in 2015 with five 100-yard receiving games and gained a reputation as one of the most dynamic playmakers in the country. Washington was second on the team in total touchdowns (10) and led the nation with four receptions of 70 yards or more. His 1,087 receiving yards made him just the fourth underclassman in OSU history to post 1,000 yards in a season, joining Rashaun Woods (2001), Dez Bryant (2008) and Justin Blackmon (2010).

WASHINGTON: SUE OGROCKI / AP

surrendered 72 sacks and have had only two 100-yard rushing performances. Gundy's offenses have always strived for balance, but Oklahoma State finished ninth in the Big 12 in rushing last season at 126.8 yards per game.

"At some point, you have to be able to establish some running game and have the balance that allows you to be able to throw the ball," Gundy says. "Defenses have made some strides in the last three years or so with spreading out offenses, so you need to have somebody who can run the ball and make a play."

If only the Cowboys could bring back Barry Sanders.

What? They are?

Indeed, the son of one of the game's greatest running backs, Barry Sanders, who set a load of rushing records during a career that ended with the 1988 Heisman Trophy, is headed to Stillwater. Barry J. Sanders, a graduate transfer from Stanford, selected Oklahoma State over TCU.

Sanders rushed for 630 yards over the past two seasons and he wasn't going to get many more attempts behind Christian McCaffrey in Palo Alto. He figures to battle for the starting job.

One area in good shape is what Oklahoma State calls its "Cowboy Back" position, a hybrid tight end/fullback. Blake Jarwin returns after being voted first-team All-Big 12 for that role in 2015.

The defensive front seven is under repair. Ends Emmanuel Ogbah and Jimmy Bean combined for 60 starts and 41.5 sacks during their OSU careers, but they've moved on. Ogbah was the Big 12's co-Defensive Player of the Year. Also, before he suffered a career-ending knee injury last season, linebacker Ryan Simmons made 31 starts.

Tackles Vincent Taylor and Vili Leveni, who missed 2015 with a knee injury, are solid and linebacker Jordan Burton should bid for all-conference honors.

There's no doubt about Oklahoma State's substance this season, nor its style. In March, the team unveiled new uniforms, and former Cowboys Dez Bryant and Brandon Weeden were among those modeling the all white, all orange and all black uniforms for the current roster.

According to Nike, the uniforms were produced with "Mach speed technology" and are 25-percent lighter in weight than the previous Oklahoma State uniforms.

"We want to stay ahead of the curve and keep Oklahoma State's uniforms out in front of everybody else in the country," Gundy says.

The players seemed to approve.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Cowboys may have signed just a single four-star recruit, but offensive tackle Tramonda Moore was a huge get as OSU beat out the Sooners for the in-state lineman. A couple of other Oklahoma preps should be difference-makers as well, including linebacker Calvin Bundage and offensive lineman Tyler Brown, a one-time TCU commit. Cornerback Rodarius Williams from Shreveport, La., could end up being the steal of the class, while Canadian linebacker Amen Ogbongbemiga is an intriguing prospect. The Cowboys only signed six players from the state of Texas, though, which has been their bread and butter of late.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Tramonda Moore,** OT ★★★★
2. **Calvin Bundage,** OLB ★★★
3. **Tyrell Alexander,** WR ★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Mason Rudolph

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	149.1	264-424-9	62.3	3770	21	290.0

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Chris Carson	12	131	517	3.9	4	43.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
James Washington	13	53	1087	20.5	10	83.6

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jordan Sterns	13	72	36	108

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Vincent Taylor	13	5.0	30

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Chad Whitener	2	65	32.5	1
Ramon Richards	2	59	29.5	1
Jordan Sterns	2	39	19.5	0
Devante Averette	2	37	18.5	0
Tre Flowers	2	3	1.5	0

TEAM TRADITION

In the late 1990s a group of friends decided to sneak in some paddles to football games. They started smacking the wooden paddles against the padded walls of Boone Pickens Stadium, and the "Paddle People" were born. Official in 2002, the group now has roughly 200 members sitting in the student section.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	OSU	OPP
SCORING	514	396
Points Per Game	39.5	30.5
FIRST DOWNS	306	288
Rushing	88	128
Passing	197	138
Penalty	21	22
RUSHING YARDAGE	1649	2430
Yards gained rushing	2011	2809
Yards lost rushing	362	379
Rushing Attempts	460	571
Average Per Rush	3.6	4.3
Average Per Game	126.8	186.9
TDs Rushing	25	26
PASSING YARDAGE	4591	3278
Comp-Att-Int	325-517-10	251-433-17
Average Per Pass	8.9	7.6
Average Per Catch	14.1	13.1
Average Per Game	353.2	252.2
TDs Passing	35	21
TOTAL OFFENSE	6240	5708
Total Plays	977	1004
Average Per Play	6.4	5.7
Average Per Game	480.0	439.1
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	42-868	70-1611
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	24-160	20-94
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-256	10-178
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.7	23.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	6.7	4.7
INT RETURN AVG.	15.1	17.8
FUMBLES-LOST	18-5	20-11
PENALTIES-YARDS	75-657	100-880
Average Per Game	50.5	67.7
PUNTS-YARDS	75-3010	73-3025
Average Per Punt	40.1	41.4
Net punt average	38.9	40.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:29	30:31
3RD-DOWN CONV.	84/192	89/211
3rd-Down Pct.	44%	42%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/10	14/23
4th-Down Pct.	80%	61%
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-231	32-191
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	67	51
FG-ATTEMPTS	16-21	13-19
ATTENDANCE	403678	348369
Games/Avg Per Game	7/57668	5/55250
Neutral Site Games		1/72117

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
OKLA. STATE	134	116	119	138	7	514
Opponent	111	135	78	72	0	396

5-YEAR RECORD 47-18

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Mason Rudolph** (6-5, 235, Jr.)
	Taylor Cornelius (6-6, 218, So.)
RB	**Chris Carson** (6-1, 215, Sr.)
	Rennie Childs (5-10, 208, Sr.)
LT	**Victor Salako** (6-6, 335, Sr.)
	Marcus Keyes (6-3, 300, Fr.)
LG	**Michael Wilson** (6-6, 305, Sr.)
	Larry Williams (6-4, 318, Jr.)
C	**Brad Lundblade** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
	Johnny Wilson (6-3, 305, Fr.)
RG	**Jesse Robinson** (6-5, 315, Jr.)
	Lemaefe Galea'i (6-4, 325, So.)
RT	**Zachary Crabtree** (6-7, 310, Jr.)
	Matthew Mucha (6-5, 300, So.)
TE	**Blake Jarwin** (6-5, 248, Sr.)
	Zac Veatch (6-3, 265, Sr.)
WR	**James Washington** (6-0, 205, Jr.)
	Jhajuan Seales (6-0, 205, Sr.)
WR	**Marcell Ateman** (6-4, 215, Sr.)
	Chris Lacy (6-3, 205, Jr.)
WR	**Jalen McCleskey** (5-10, 170, So.)
	Austin Hays (6-2, 195, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Jarrell Owens** (6-3, 270, So.)
	Trey Carter (6-3, 285, So.)
DT	**Vincent Taylor** (6-3, 310, Jr.)
	Darrion Daniels (6-3, 305, So.)
DT	**Vili Levini** (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Motekiai Maile (6-3, 315, Sr.)
DE	**Jordan Brailford** (6-3, 245, So.)
	Cole Walterscheid (6-5, 254, So.)
LB	**Jordan Burton** (6-2, 215, Sr.)
	Kevin Henry (6-0, 225, Fr.)
LB	**Chad Whitener** (6-0, 248, Jr.)
	Justin Phillips (6-0, 235, So.)
LB	**Devante Averette** (5-11, 230, Sr.)
	Gyasi Akem (6-2, 230, Jr.)
CB	**Ashton Lampkin** (6-0, 190, Sr.)
	Darius Curry (6-1, 205, Jr.)
CB	**Ramon Richards** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
	Malik Kearse (6-0, 160, Jr.)
FS	**Tre Flowers** (6-3, 198, Jr.)
	Jerel Morrow (5-10, 200, Jr.)
SS	**Jordan Sterns** (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	Derrick Moncrief (6-2, 220, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Ben Grogan** (6-1, 190, Sr.)
P	**Zach Sinor** (5-10, 215, So.)

Sporting News All-American

TEXAS
LONGHORNS

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

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Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

D'Onta Foreman

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.4	Notre Dame	3-38
S.10	UTEP	
S.17	@CALIFORNIA	44-45
O.1	@OKLA. STATE	27-30
O.8	Oklahoma*	24-17
O.15	Iowa State	0-24
O.22	@KANSAS STATE	23-9
O.29	Baylor	23-17
N.5	@TEXAS TECH	45-48
N.12	West Virginia	20-38
N.19	@KANSAS	59-20
N.25	TCU	7-50

At Dallas

COACH

Charlie Strong
Third year (11-14)
CAREER RECORD: 48-30

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Sterlin Gilbert (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Vance Bedford (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Darrell K. Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium (100,119)
TICKETS: 800-982-BEVO
SITE: Austin, Texas
WEBSITE: texassports.com
TWITTER: @Longhorn_FB

Charlie Strong enters his third season as the Texas coach and he understands what that means.

"This is a critical year for us," Strong says. "This is our third year. It's time for us to move forward."

Beyond time, if you ask a Longhorns fan. Strong's 11-14 record in Austin isn't what was expected when he replaced Mack Brown. The program had started slipping in Brown's final years, but Texas turned winning records in his final three seasons.

But there were signs of improvement in Strong's second year, even though Texas didn't go bowling. The Longhorns beat Oklahoma and Baylor, proving for at least two afternoons they could match up with the Big 12's best.

Moving forward means remaining competitive against those programs, plus TCU and Oklahoma State, without pratfalls like the shutout loss to Iowa State.

Texas begins this season with a mostly Strong-recruited roster, and many of his recruits played over Brown's recruits. According to ESPN, of the 45 players signed in Brown's final two years, 12 were with the team as spring practice got under way.

But before Texas can count on taking that next big step, however, it has to get better at quarterback. A new offensive coordinator, Sterlin Gilbert from Tulsa, replaces Shawn Watson and he'll oversee the QB battle among Tyrone Swoopes, Jerrod Heard and several others including true freshman Shane Buechele.

Swoopes opened last season as the starter but was benched after the opening-game drubbing at Notre Dame. He returned for the season finale against Baylor and delivered a big performance.

Heard started the 10 games in between. He threw for 1,214 yards and rushed for 556 with eight total touchdowns. They are the most experienced and started the competition ahead of the others, but everybody will have a shot.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

RB **D'Onta Foreman**

Foreman is set to lead a two-pronged rushing attack alongside sophomore Chris Warren III for the Longhorns in 2016 after suffering a hand injury while running wild on West Virginia for 147 yards and a score last November. Prior to his season-ending injury, Foreman had four 100-yard outings in six games, averaging 7.2 yards per carry. The 238-pound power back seemingly came out of nowhere after arriving on campus as a three-star recruit. Foreman and Warren could be one of the best one-two rushing punches in the country.

FOREMAN: MICHAEL THOMAS / AP

Gilbert has a track record of success, improving offenses at Eastern Illinois, Bowling Green and Tulsa.

"I think I've got it down," Gilbert says.

Joining Gilbert from the Tulsa staff is Matt Mattox, who'll coach the offensive line and coordinate the running game.

Texas has been defense-oriented under Strong, But winning the Big 12 means having the ability to win a shootout. Four of the top 10 scoring offenses in Division 1 played in the Big 12 last season. The Longhorns ranked only ahead of Iowa State and Kansas in the conference. They finished last in passing and only the Jayhawks punted more often.

But Texas should remain one of the Big 12's better running teams, and that can be an advantage when trying to keep potent opposing offenses off the field. Leading rusher D'Onta Foreman (68.1 yards per game) is back. Chris Warren III rushed for 276 yards and four touchdowns against Texas Tech. Swoopes and Heard are part of that attack.

One advantage for the quarterbacks is wide receiver John Burt, who caught 28 passes for 457 yards and two touchdowns last season as a freshman.

Improving the offense is a must and its failings overshadowed a defense that surrendered 452.6 yards per game, ranking 106th nationally. All eyes will be on middle linebacker Malik Jefferson.

Big things were expected during his freshman season and Jefferson delivered. He finished second on the team with 61 tackles, added seven tackles for loss, a fumble recovery for a touchdown, and two of his 2.5 sacks came in the victory over Oklahoma.

Jefferson was named Big 12 Defensive Freshman of the Year despite not playing in the final game because of an ankle injury and stomach ailment. Jefferson was one of 17 freshmen who played last season, and he is willing to accept a leadership role.

"I've earned my stripes," Jefferson says. "I hope my teammates respect that."

Jefferson and fellow rising sophomores Charles Omenihu at defensive end and P.J. Locke III, a safety, got involved in the recruiting process and helped the Longhorns land nine members in the final two days that elevated the national perception of the class.

Strong wants Jefferson, who plays the middle, to take as much a leadership role as he can handle.

"I told Malik, at that position, you always expect that guy to be your leader," Strong says. "And because of the year he had last season, and so much is said and written about him, it's almost been placed on him."

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Longhorns had perhaps the best National Signing Day of any team in the country, landing an incredible nine players that day. The biggest coup was the nation's top safety, Brandon Jones, who had seemingly been a longtime lean towards Texas A&M. Jeffrey McCulloch should team with sophomore Malik Jefferson to form one of the Big 12's top linebacking corps. Coach Charlie Strong put together a class that should buy him a little bit more time in Austin to put results on the field. It will be a young team again for Strong, but the nucleus will be as talented as any other program in the Big 12.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Brandon Jones,** S ★★★★
2. **Jeffrey McCulloch,** OLB ★★★★
3. **Erick Fowler,** OLB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jerrod Heard

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	126.1	92-159-5	57.9	1214	5	101.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
D'Onta Foreman	10	95	681	7.2	5	68.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
John Burt	12	28	457	16.3	2	38.1

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Malik Jefferson	11	37	24	61

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Naashon Hughes	12	5.5	48

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Dylan Haines	5	102	20.4	0

TEAM TRADITION

Created in 1953 as a response to shotgun blasts heard at the Red River Rivalry, "Smokey" the cannon is a famous replica Civil War artillery cannon that weighs more than 1,200 pounds. Smokey fires four 10-gauge shotgun shells after every Longhorns score and kickoff, and at the end of every quarter. It's also fired at the conclusion of the famous fight song, "The Eyes of Texas."

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	TEX	OPP
SCORING	317	364
Points Per Game	26.4	30.3
FIRST DOWNS	202	306
Rushing	123	147
Passing	69	137
Penalty	10	22
RUSHING YARDAGE	2698	2630
Yards gained rushing	3061	2998
Yards lost rushing	363	368
Rushing Attempts	529	583
Average Per Rush	5.1	4.5
Average Per Game	224.8	219.2
TDs Rushing	27	21
PASSING YARDAGE	1751	2801
Comp-Att-Int	139-252-6	229-382-13
Average Per Pass	6.9	7.3
Average Per Catch	12.6	12.2
Average Per Game	145.9	233.4
TDs Passing	9	24
TOTAL OFFENSE	4449	5431
Total Plays	781	965
Average Per Play	5.7	5.6
Average Per Game	370.8	452.6
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	47-929	12-316
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	23-279	13-50
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	13-239	6-22
KICK RETURN AVG.	19.8	26.3
PUNT RETURN AVG.	12.1	3.8
INT RETURN AVG.	18.4	3.7
FUMBLES-LOST	14-8	23-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	77-709	71-578
Average Per Game	59.1	48.2
PUNTS-YARDS	77-3179	65-2572
Average Per Punt	41.3	39.6
Net punt average	39.1	33.7
TIME OF POSS./GAME	27:07	32:53
3RD-DOWN CONV.	61/172	84/190
3rd-Down Pct.	35%	44%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	6/15	9/17
4th-Down Pct.	40%	53%
SACKS BY-YARDS	37-247	32-212
MISC. YARDS	0	30
TDS SCORED	40	46
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-17	14-19
ATTENDANCE	540210	287934
Games/Avg Per Game	6/90035	5/57587
Neutral Site Games		1/91546

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
TEXAS	95	64	69	89	0	317
Opponent	86	94	96	88	0	364

5-YEAR RECORD 36-28

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Tyrone Swoopes** (6-4, 254, Sr.)
	Shane Buechele (6-1, 191, Fr.)
RB	**D'Onta Foreman** (6-0, 238, Jr.)
	Chris Warren III (6-2, 255, So.)
LT	**Connor Williams** (6-6, 288, So.)
	Tristan Nickelson (6-9, 316, Jr.)
LG	**Patrick Vahe** (6-3, 326, So.)
	Elijah Rodriguez (6-5, 307, So.)
C	**Zach Shackelford** (6-3, 296, Fr.)
	Terrell Cuney (6-2, 298, So.)
RG	**Brandon Hodges** (6-4, 318, Jr.)
	Jake McMillon (6-3, 294, So.)
RT	**Kent Perkins** (6-5, 320, Sr.)
	Buck Major (6-6, 328, Fr.)
TE	**Andrew Beck** (6-3, 244, Jr.)
	Caleb Bluiett (6-3, 266, Sr.)
WR	**Collin Johnson** (6-6, 212, Fr.)
	Jake Oliver (6-3, 222, Jr.)
WR	**John Burt** (6-3, 189, So.)
	Lorenzo Joe (6-3, 207, Jr.)
WR	**Armanti Foreman** (5-11, 209, Jr.)
	Jacorey Warrick (5-11, 172, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Charles Omenihu** (6-6, 262, So.)
	Bryce Cottrell (6-2, 266, Sr.)
NT	**Paul Boyette Jr.** (6-3, 314, Sr.)
	Chris Nelson (6-1, 301, So.)
DT	**Poona Ford** (5-11, 313, Jr.)
	Chris Nelson (6-1, 301, So.)
DE	**Naashon Hughes** (6-4, 239, Jr.)
	Breckyn Hager (6-3, 230, So.)
SLB	**Timothy Cole** (6-1, 240, Sr.)
	Edwin Freeman (6-1, 232, So.)
MLB	**Malik Jefferson** (6-3, 238, So.)
	Dalton Santos (6-2, 257, Sr.)
WLB	**Anthony Wheeler** (6-2, 232, So.)
	Edwin Freeman (6-1, 232, So.)
CB	**Davante Davis** (6-2, 199, So.)
	Kris Boyd (6-0, 192, So.)
CB	**Holton Hill** (6-2, 195, So.)
	John Bonney (6-1, 192, So.)
FS	**Jason Hall** (6-3, 219, Jr.)
	P.J. Locke III (5-10, 204, So.)
SS	**Dylan Haines** (6-1, 201, Sr.)
	Kevin Vaccaro (5-8, 182, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Evan Moore** (6-3, 198, So.)
P	**Michael Dickson** (6-2, 213, So.)

Sporting News All-American

TCU
HORNED FROGS

5
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

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SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

DE Josh Carraway

As a momentum-builder for the following season, bowl success sometimes works and mostly does not. More often, a program should simply accept the game for what it is: an exhibition that allows a team a few extra practice weeks.

Texas Christian may not get a bounce into this season from January's Alamo Bowl triumph, but the game will live in the memories to those who watched and become part of the program's lore.

Down 31-0 to Oregon, the Horned Frogs rallied to tie in regulation and win it in the third overtime behind a quarterback, Bram Kohlhausen, making the only start of his career in his final game. Kohlhausen was thrust into the role when Trevone Boykin was arrested for a bar fight two days earlier.

The Frogs scored on all of their possessions in the second half and each of the overtimes, and the outcome took a bit of sting away from a season that fell short of expectations. Coach Gary Patterson's team opened the season with eight straight victories, climbing to No. 5 in the polls. But losses to Oklahoma State and Oklahoma doomed TCU's hopes of winning a second Big 12 title in three years.

With Boykin and All-America wide receiver Josh Doctson gone, TCU will look to its defense to set the tone. That's usually the case in Fort Worth under Patterson, but an injury-filled 2015 put the onus on the offense to win games.

Ten different defensive starters lost time to injuries last season and only Rice played more freshmen and redshirt freshmen (31) than TCU (30). Players like end James McFarland, the Defensive MVP of the Peach Bowl in the previous season, linebacker Sammy Douglas, safety Kenny Iloka and cornerback Ranthony Texada figure to return.

The top candidate to replace Boykin is junior Kenny Hill, the former Texas A&M starter who passed for 2,649 yards and 23 touchdowns in 2014. There's no Doctson-level talent at wide receiver, but there are plenty of candidates in the mix to keep the position productive. Kyle Hicks looks ready to step into graduated Aaron Green's shoes at running back.

But the biggest issue on the offensive side is the line, where four starters are being replaced–although center Austin Schlottman and guard Matt Pryor started the last three games last year due to injuries. With a new quarterback and new skill-position weapons to break in, the development of the offensive line will be a critical early factor for the Frogs.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	South Dakota State	
S.10	Arkansas	
S.17	Iowa State	45-21
S.23	@SMU	56-37
O.1	Oklahoma	29-30
O.8	@KANSAS	23-17
O.22	@WEST VIRGINIA	40-10
O.29	Texas Tech	55-52
N.5	@BAYLOR	28-21
N.19	Oklahoma State	29-49
N.25	@TEXAS	50-7
D.3	Kansas State	52-45

COACH

Gary Patterson
16th year (143-47)
CAREER RECORD: 143-47

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Sonny Cumbie (third year)
Doug Meacham (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Chad Glasgow (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-2
(Beat Oregon in the Alamo Bowl, 47-41)
STADIUM: Amon G. Carter Stadium (45,000)
TICKETS: 877-828-3764
SITE: Fort Worth, Texas
WEBSITE: gofrogs.com
TWITTER: @TCUFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
45-19

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Kenny Hill** (6-1, 205, Jr.)
RB	**Kyle Hicks** (5-10, 210, Jr.)
LT	**Joseph Noteboom** (6-5, 315, Jr.)
LG	**Patrick Morris** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
C	**Austin Schlottman** (6-6, 300, Jr.)
RG	**Matt Pryor** (6-7, 350, Jr.)
RT	**Aviante Collins** (6-6, 305, Sr.)
TE	**Charlie Reid** (6-4, 235, Jr.)
WR	**Deanté Gray** (5-10, 183, Sr.)
WR	**KaVontae Turpin** (5-9, 153, So.)
WR	**Jaelan Austin** (6-2, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Josh Carraway** (6-4, 250, Sr.)
DT	**Aaron Curry** (6-2, 270, Sr.)
DT	**Breylin Mitchell** (6-4, 270, So.)
DE	**James McFarland** (6-2, 250, Sr.)
MLB	**Montrel Wilson** (6-3, 210, So.)
SLB	**Travin Howard** (6-1, 210, Jr.)
CB	**Ranthony Texada** (5-10, 170, Jr.)
CB	**Jeff Gladney** (6-0, 175, Fr.)
SS	**Denzel Johnson** (6-2, 210, Sr.)
FS	**Niko Small** (5-10, 180, So.)
WS	**Nick Orr** (5-10, 187, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Jonathan Song** (5-10, 170, So.)
P	**Adam Nunez** (6-0, 180, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

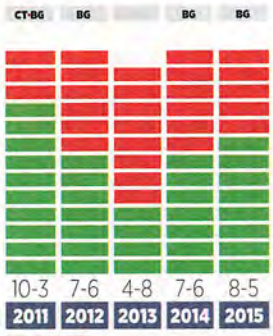
1. **Sewo Olonilua,** ATH ★★★★
2. **Isaiah Chambers,** DE ★★★★
3. **Isaiah Graham,** WR ★★★★

Over a third of TCU's class was on campus for spring ball and several of those players will likely be early contributors. Sewo Olonilua could also play safety but will likely be the next star running back for the Frogs. Junior-college star Taj Williams will help lessen the blow of losing receiver Josh Doctson to the NFL Draft.

CARRAWAY: MATTHEW PEARCE / ICON SPORTSWIRE

WEST VIRGINIA
MOUNTAINEERS

5-YEAR RECORD
36-28



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

QB Skyler Howard

HOWARD: RAYMOND THOMPSON / AP

West Virginia, the program that won its first Big 12 contest 70-63 and usually hasn't felt insecure about its offense, took on a different identity last season.

The Mountaineers played some defense. They were good enough to pitch a couple of shutouts and hold two other teams to six points. There were a few shootouts along the way–they're unavoidable in the wide-open Big 12–but West Virginia was at or near the top in the most important defensive categories, including rushing defense, last season.

Also, the Mountaineers led the Big 12 and tied for fifth nationally in turnovers gained at 31. It all helped West Virginia to a solid 8-5 season capped by a victory over Arizona State in the Cactus Bowl.

But with only four defensive starters returning, the objective is to maintain. The bulk of the reconstruction is happening with the back seven.

The secondary, perhaps the Big 12's best, must be rebuilt, and all-conference linebacker Nick Kwiatkoski has also departed. It's why the Mountaineers put a heavy emphasis on that side of the ball in recruiting.

West Virginia signed 15 on defense, 11 on offense and one specialist.

Of the defensive group, coach Dana Holgorsen signed nine defensive backs and four linebackers. Potential immediate-impact newcomers are prep linebacker Brendan Ferns and junior-college defensive back Kyzir White. Both have brothers who play for the Mountaineers.

On the offensive side, running back Wendell Smallwood surprised the program by announcing he was leaving after his junior season. Smallwood led the Big 12 in rushing with 1,519 yards and eight 100-yard rushing games. The next man up there for the Mountaineers is Rushel Shell, who led West Virginia in rushing in 2014 and pitched in 708 yards and eight touchdowns last season.

Returning is quarterback Skyler Howard. Yes, defense became West Virginia's calling card last season, but the Howard-led offense came through for the bowl victory. He passed for 532 yards and became the fourth Big 12 quarterback in the last six years to surpass 3,000 passing and 500 rushing yards and will work with new offensive coordinator Joe Wickline.

"Skylar has a lot of ball under his belt," Holgorsen says. "He has played a lot. We know what he can do as far as that is concerned. His numbers are great. Let's not forget that this kid had the second-most passing yards in the history of this program."

Four of the top five leaders in receptions return led by Shelton Gibson (887 yards, 9 TDs).

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Skyler Howard (6-0, 207, Sr.)
FB	Elijah Wellman (6-1, 235, Jr.)
RB	Rushel Shell (5-10, 220, Sr.)
LT	Yodny Cajuste (6-5, 300, So.)
LG	Adam Pankey (6-5, 316, Sr.)
C	Tyler Orlosky (6-4, 295, Sr.)
RG	Kyle Bosch (6-5, 308, Jr.)
RT	Marcell Lazard (6-6, 310, So.)
TE	Jon Lewis (6-3, 265, Jr.)
WR	Daikiel Shorts Jr. (6-1, 204, Sr.)
WR	Ka'Raun White (6-1, 198, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Noble Nwachukwu (6-2, 275, Sr.)
NT	Darrien Howard (6-1, 297, Sr.)
DE	Christian Brown (6-2, 298, Sr.)
LB	Justin Arndt (5-11, 215, Sr.)
LB	Al-Rasheed Benton (6-1, 235, Jr.)
LB	Sean Walters (6-2, 228, Sr.)
CB	Nana Kyeremeh (5-10, 186, Jr.)
CB	Rasul Douglas (6-2, 208, Sr.)
FS	Dravon Askew-Henry (5-11, 198, Jr.)
S	Marvin Gross Jr. (6-3, 208, Jr.)
S	Jeremy Tyler (5-11, 210, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Josh Lambert (6-0, 203, Sr.)
P	Billy Kinney (6-4, 207, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Brendan Ferns,** LB ★★★★
2. **Steven Smothers,** WR ★★★★
3. **Kyzir White,** S ★★★★

The Mountaineers have made the state of Florida their bread and butter of late, but only signed a single freshman from the Sunshine State this year. Time will tell if that was a mistake. Nine of the 27 signees arrived early to go through spring ball. Junior-college running back Justin Crawford could be a breakout star.

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Missouri	
S.10	Youngstown State	
S.24	BYU*	
O.1	Kansas State	23-24
O.15	@TEXAS TECH	31-26
O.22	TCU	10-40
O.29	@OKLA. STATE	26-33
N.5	Kansas	49-0
N.12	@TEXAS	38-20
N.19	Oklahoma	24-44
N.26	@IOWA STATE	30-6
D.3	Baylor	38-62

*At Landover, MD

COACH

Dana Holgorsen
Sixth year (36-28)
CAREER RECORD: 36-28

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joe Wickline (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tony Gibson (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Arizona State in the Cactus Bowl, 43-42)
STADIUM: Milan Puskar Stadium (60,000)
TICKETS: 800-WVU-GAME
SITE: Morgantown, W.Va.
WEBSITE: wvusports.com
TWITTER: @WVUfootball

TEXAS TECH
RED RAIDERS

7

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB **Justin Stockton**

Patrick Mahomes II is an excellent baseball player, good enough to be selected in the 2014 draft by the Detroit Tigers. Pitching runs in the family. His dad, Pat, spent 11 years in the majors. Mahomes' godfather is longtime big-leaguer LaTroy Hawkins.

Mahomes played on the Texas Tech baseball team as a freshman, but this spring there was no diamond time. Mahomes concentrated on quarterbacking the Red Raiders through spring ball.

"A little part of me is sad just because I played baseball my whole entire life and just grew up around it," Mahomes says. "But I kind of determined with my family that I want to just focus on football and take my game to the next level and put all my focus there.

"The main thing I've seen is just my arm slot stay the same. When you go from baseball to football, you kind of tend to get mixed up on which way you're throwing the ball. So that was a major thing and then, of course, the weight room, just the workout every single day and getting tough workouts in. I've gotten a lot stronger."

Mahomes looks to build on what's shaping up as an outstanding career. As a sophomore, he passed for a Big 12-best 4,653 yards and his 36 touchdowns were matched only by Oklahoma's Baker Mayfield. Mahomes led the conference in total offense at 393 yards per game. Tech was one of two teams to score at least 25 points in every game last season and, more importantly, after missing out on a bowl game the year before, the Red Raiders returned to the postseason, knocking off nemeses Texas and Kansas State along the way.

Defense needs to take the next step for Tech to compete in the Big 12's upper division. The Red Raiders have the ability to outscore opponents but often can't prevent a shootout. In losses to Oklahoma and Oklahoma State on consecutive weekends last season, Tech surrendered 133 points.

Senior defensive lineman Ondre Pipkins, a Michigan transfer, brings experience to that side of the ball after playing in 24 games for the Wolverines. Safety Jah'Shawn Johnson piled up stats as a freshman last season with 85 tackles, four fumble recoveries and two forced fumbles.

Newcomers figure to get hard looks on the defensive side. But with Mahomes involved in a full-time capacity, the Red Raiders should be their usual hard-to-contain selves on the offensive side, and that always gives them a chance.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Stephen F. Austin	
S.10	@ARIZONA STATE	
S.17	Louisiana Tech	
S.29	Kansas	30-20
O.8	@KANSAS STATE	59-44
O.15	West Virginia	26-31
O.22	Oklahoma	27-63
O.29	@TCU	52-55
N.5	Texas	48-45
N.12	@OKLA. STATE	53-70
N.19	@IOWA STATE	66-31
N.25	Baylor*	35-63

At Arlington, TX

COACH

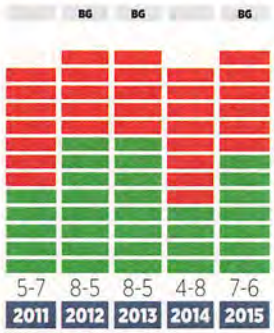
Kliff Kingsbury
Fourth year (19-19)
CAREER RECORD: 19-19

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Eric Morris (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
David Gibbs (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to LSU in the Texas Bowl, 56-27)
STADIUM: Jones AT&T Stadium (60,454)
TICKETS: 806-742-TECH
SITE: Lubbock, Texas
WEBSITE: texastech.com
TWITTER: @TTU_WreckEm

5-YEAR RECORD
32-31



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Patrick Mahomes II** (6-3, 230, Jr.)
RB	**Justin Stockton** (5-10, 200, Jr.)
LT	**Baylen Brown** (6-5, 305, Sr.)
LG	**Madison Akamnonu** (6-5, 310, Fr.)
C	**Tony Morales** (6-3, 295, Sr.)
RG	**Justin Murphy** (6-6, 310, So.)
RT	**Terence Steele** (6-6, 300, Fr.)
WR	**Ja'Delon High** (5-11, 175, Jr.)
WR	**Cameron Batson** (5-9, 175, Jr.)
WR	**Ian Sadler** (5-11, 195, Jr.)
WR	**Reginald Davis III** (6-0, 185, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Zach Barnes** (6-3, 240, Jr.)
NT	**Ondre Pipkins** (6-3, 325, Sr.)
DT	**Breiden Fehoko** (6-3, 295, So.)
DE	**Gary Moore** (6-5, 240, Jr.)
OLB	**Malik Jenkins** (6-1, 225, Sr.)
MLB	**Dakota Allen** (6-2, 225, So.)
OLB	**D'Vonta Hinton** (5-9, 225, So.)
CB	**Justis Nelson** (6-2, 180, Sr.)
CB	**Thierry Nguema** (5-10, 175, Sr.)
FS	**Jah'Shawn Johnson** (5-10, 180, So.)
SS	**Keenon Ward** (5-9, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Clayton Hatfield** (5-10, 170, So.)
P	**Michael Barden** (5-10, 175, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING
1 **Derrick Willies,** WR ★★★★
2 **T.J. Vasher,** WR ★★★★
3 **Da'Leon Ward,** RB ★★★

Jett Duffey was not the highest-rated quarterback, but he was simply a winner in high school. A dual threat, he will add a new wrinkle to the Red Raiders' offense. The defense needs difference-makers, though, and coach Kliff Kingsbury and his staff did not quite address it as much as they might have needed to.

STOCKTON: JOHN RIVERA / ICON SPORTSWIRE

KANSAS STATE
WILDCATS

FB Winston Dimel

As the 2015 season drew to a close, speculation about coach Bill Snyder's future increased. Would he return as the Wildcats' coach?

The noise grew so loud that K-State issued a statement after the team's bowl loss to Arkansas. Yes, Snyder would be back for a 25th season, eighth in his second term. With some other retirements after last season, Snyder's 193 career victories among active coaches rank second only to Notre Dame's Brian Kelly, who has 226, including his time at Division II Grand Valley State. Nick Saban is tied with Snyder at 193.

With that detail checked off—not to worry, recruits!—Kansas State could get back to the business of working on the issues that produced the program's first sub-.500 Big 12 record since 2010. K-State had to win its final three regular-season games to automatically qualify for a bowl game, and that included a miraculous comeback against Iowa State.

The Wildcats were dealt bad blows at quarterback last season. They came into the year with a strong competition among four candidates, but the winner, Jesse Ertz, tore his ACL on the season's first play. More quarterbacks were injured and the situation grew so dire that wide receiver Kody Cook was the starter for the bowl game.

Most who were part of last season's QB competition are back and Ertz figures to be the best bet to get first-team snaps. But the competition is open and includes a promising newcomer, freshman Skylar Thompson, who enrolled early.

Other parts of the offense need more attention. The offensive line returns only center Dalton Risner. Wide receiver needs a boost, but running back Charles Jones, who collected 476 of his 696 rushing yards last season in the second half, is back along with others in the competition.

There's good news on defense. Safety Dante Barnett, also lost for the season in the 2015 opener, received a medical redshirt and gets a new start at his senior campaign. He started every game over the previous two years and was a second-team all-league selection in 2014.

The defensive line will be anchored by end Jordan Willis, who finished second last season in the Big 12 with 9.5 sacks, and Elijah Lee should rank among the league's top linebackers.

No summary of K-State would be complete without mentioning special teams. The Wildcats have returned at least one kickoff for a touchdown in each of the past 11 years, tops in college football, and returning kicker Matthew McCrane emerged as a weapon in the final five games of last season.

5-YEAR RECORD
44-21

BG	CT-BG	BG	BG	BG
10-3	11-2	8-5	9-4	6-7
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Jesse Ertz (6-3, 205, Jr.)
FB	Winston Dimel (6-1, 235, So.)
RB	Charles Jones (5-10, 206, Sr.)
LT	Scott Frantz (6-5, 275, Fr.)
LG	Will Ash (6-3, 325, Sr.)
C	Dalton Risner (6-5, 300, So.)
RG	Terrale Johnson (6-1, 303, Sr.)
RT	Breontae Matthews (6-6, 315, Jr.)
TE	Dayton Valentine (6-4, 262, So.)
WR	Dominique Heath (5-9, 175, So.)
WR	Zach Reuter (6-3, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jordan Willis (6-5, 250, Sr.)
DT	Will Geary (6-0, 297, Jr.)
DT	Craig Settles (6-5, 310, Sr.)
DE	Tanner Wood (6-5, 263, Jr.)
LB	Elijah Lee (6-3, 218, Jr.)
LB	Will Davis (6-0, 224, Sr.)
LB	Charmeachealle Moore (6-0, 221, Sr.)
CB	Cedric Dozier (5-10, 180, Sr.)
CB	Duke Shelley (5-9, 160, So.)
FS	Kendall Adams (6-1, 213, So.)
SS	Dante Barnett (6-1, 193, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Matthew McCrane (5-10, 165, Jr.)
P	Nick Walsh (5-11, 212, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Skylar Thompson,** QB ★★★
2. **Byron Pringle,** WR ★★★
3. **Breontae Matthews,** OT ★★★

Coach Bill Snyder's staff has gotten away from relying so heavily on junior-college transfers as the Wildcats signed only four this time around. Kansas State signed a talented quarterback in Skylar Thompson, who went through spring ball on campus. This is a small class but one that should have some impact players.

8
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	@STANFORD	
S.17	Florida Atlantic	
S.24	Missouri State	
O.1	@WEST VIRGINIA	24-23
O.8	Texas Tech	44-59
O.15	@OKLAHOMA	0-55
O.22	Texas	9-23
O.29	@IOWA STATE	38-35
N.5	Oklahoma State	34-36
N.19	@BAYLOR	24-31
N.26	Kansas	45-14
D.3	@TCU	45-52

COACH
Bill Snyder
25th year (193-101-1)
CAREER RECORD: 193-101-1

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Dana Dimel (eighth year)
Del Miller (eighth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tom Hayes (fifth year)

FAST FACTS
2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Arkansas in the Liberty Bowl, 45-23)
STADIUM: Bill Snyder Family Stadium (50,000)
TICKETS: 800-221-CATS
SITE: Manhattan, Kan.
WEBSITE: kstatesports.com
TWITTER: @KStateFB

DIMEL: ORLIN WAGNER / AP

IOWA STATE
CYCLONES

9

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

WR Allen Lazard

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Northern Iowa	31-7
S.10	@IOWA	17-31
S.17	@TCU	21-45
S.24	San Jose State	
O.1	Baylor	27-45
O.8	@OKLA. STATE	31-35
O.15	@TEXAS	24-0
O.29	Kansas State	35-38
N.3	Oklahoma	16-52
N.12	@KANSAS	38-13
N.19	Texas Tech	31-66
N.26	West Virginia	6-30

COACH

Matt Campbell
First year
CAREER RECORD: 36-15

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tom Manning (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jon Heacock (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Jack Trice Stadium (61,500)
TICKETS: 888-478-2925
SITE: Ames, Iowa
WEBSITE: cyclones.com
TWITTER: @CycloneFB

After a successful playing career as a defensive end at Mount Union, where the Purple Raiders won three NCAA Division 3 championships and 54 of 55 games, Matt Campbell sought a career in coaching. He blanketed Division 1 programs with resumes, but when he didn't land a position Campbell went to work at a cement company in his Massillon, Ohio, hometown.

Finally, Campbell caught a break. A former contact put him in touch with Bowling Green, where he began working as a graduate assistant.

His career moved along quickly. Back to Mount Union as offensive coordinator, back to Bowling Green, to the Toledo staff and in 2012 the Rockets' head-coaching position. Four winning seasons later, the fast track continued when Campbell was named Iowa State's head coach, replacing Paul Rhoads.

Campbell went 36-15 at Toledo. He turned 36 on the day he accepted the ISU job. He brings youthful energy and an excitement level to a program that has slipped to eight victories over the past three seasons after going to a bowl game in three of Rhoads' first four years.

Campbell says the program doesn't need an enthusiasm boost. "I'm floored by the energy and leadership at ISU," he says.

He saw it a year earlier when he brought the Rockets to Ames to play Iowa State. The team arrived to Jack Trice Stadium early so Campbell took a walk through the parking lot. He even caught a glimpse of the team's "Spirit Walk." After the game, he phoned his wife Erica and told her "you wouldn't believe this place. The culture, the fans, facilities, people. This is a special place."

Now Campbell gets to lead it and help push the Cyclones back to competitiveness. Quarterback Joel Lanning took over for Sam B. Richardson last season and finished with 10 touchdown passes and four interceptions. In his first start, Lanning helped guide Iowa State to a 24-0 victory over Texas.

The Cyclones' biggest offensive weapon is running back Mike Warren, who turned in a Freshman All-America season by averaging 111.6 rushing yards per game. But he'll be operating behind an offensive line that's breaking in four new starters.

The good news on defense is the return of safety Kamari Cotton-Moya. He was a Freshman All-American two years ago but missed the final six games of his sophomore season with a hamstring injury. He returns as one of the top safeties in the Big 12.

5-YEAR RECORD
20-42

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Joel Lanning** (6-2, 232, Jr.)
RB	**Mike Warren** (6-0, 200, So.)
LT	**Jaypee Philbert Jr.** (6-5, 314, Jr.)
LG	**Nick Fett** (6-7, 313, Sr.)
C	**Julian Good-Jones** (6-5, 270, Fr.)
RG	**Patrick Scoggins** (6-1, 293, Sr.)
RT	**Jake Campos** (6-8, 297, Jr.)
TE	**Justin Chandler** (6-4, 266, Sr.)
WR	**Dondre Daley** (6-2, 191, Sr.)
WR	**Trever Ryen** (5-11, 190, Jr.)
WR	**Allen Lazard** (6-5, 223, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**J.D. Waggoner** (6-3, 250, Jr.)
NG	**Demond Tucker** (6-0, 296, Sr.)
DT	**Pierre Aka** (6-4, 293, Sr.)
DE	**Darius White** (6-1, 251, Sr.)
LB	**Willie Harvey** (6-0, 222, So.)
LB	**Kane Seeley** (6-2, 239, Sr.)
LB	**Jordan Harris** (6-0, 233, Sr.)
CB	**Jomal Wiltz** (5-10, 174, Sr.)
CB	**Brian Peavy** (5-9, 184, So.)
S	**Kamari Cotton-Moya** (6-1, 197, Jr.)
S	**De'Monte Ruth** (5-9, 163, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Colin Downing** (5-11, 187, Jr.)
P	**Cole Netten** (6-1, 224, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Sean Foster,** OT ★★★
2 **Chase Allen,** TE ★★★
3 **Deshaunte Jones,** ATH ★★★

Despite signing 29 players, none of them were ranked as four-star recruits. Tight end Chase Allen was a big get over a who's who of national teams that were after the Missouri prospect. If junior-college QB transfer Jacob Park, a former University of Georgia player, pans out, then it will go a long way towards bringing the Cyclones back.

LAZARD: JUSTIN HAYWORTH / AP

KANSAS JAYHAWKS

5-YEAR RECORD
9-51

2-10	1-11	3-9	3-9	0-12
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Ryan Willis (6-4, 211, So.)
RB	Ke'aun Kinner (5-9, 191, Sr.)
LT	Clyde McCauley III (6-5, 307, So.)
LG	Jayson Rhodes (6-4, 311, Jr.)
C	Joe Gibson (6-3, 310, Jr.)
RG	Jacob Bragg (6-4, 291, So.)
RT	D'Andre Banks (6-3, 310, Sr.)
TE	Ben Johnson (6-5, 245, Jr.)
WR	LaQuvionte Gonzalez (5-10, 176, Jr.)
WR	Steven Sims Jr. (5-10, 176, So.)
WR	Jeremiah Booker (6-2, 202, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Dorance Armstrong Jr. (6-4, 241, So.)
DT	Daniel Wise (6-3, 290, So.)
DT	Isi Holani (6-3, 325, Jr.)
DE	Anthony Olobia (6-5, 247, Sr.)
LB	Joe Dineen Jr. (6-2, 225, Jr.)
LB	Marcquis Roberts (6-1, 223, Sr.)
CB	Marnez Ogletree (5-10, 190, Sr.)
CB	Derrick Neal (5-10, 170, Jr.)
S	Fish Smithson (5-11, 201, Sr.)
S	Tyrone Miller Jr. (6-0, 182, So.)
NB	Tevin Shaw (5-11, 206, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Matthew Wyman (6-1, 225, Sr.)
P	Matthew Wyman (6-1, 225, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Maciah Long,** LB ★★★
2. **Chris Hughes,** OT ★★★
3. **Ian Peterson,** S ★★★

Struggles on the field last season combined with a very small class (18) on February's National Signing Day made it so the Jayhawks finished at the bottom of the Big 12 recruiting rankings. Still, coach David Beaty used his Texas connections to land some talented players. A high school quarterback, Maciah Long, has a chance to be an all-conference player at linebacker.

QB Ryan Willis

WILLIS: ORLIN WAGNER / AP

There is no bigger uphill climb in college football than Kansas.

Don't look at the last-place teams from other power conferences. Boston College, Georgia Tech, Rutgers, Purdue, Oregon State, Colorado, South Carolina and Auburn–all bottom-dwellers in their divisions–at least won a game, even two.

Only the Jayhawks and UCF from the American Athletic Conference went winless last season.

While other programs can think in terms of making the proper adjustments to win a division or conference or get to a bowl game, Kansas' first step is getting a first victory for second-year head coach David Beaty.

It could happen in the opener. Rhode Island, an FCS program that finished 1-10 last year, visits Lawrence. After that, it's difficult to see the Jayhawks favored to win another game.

The spring got off to a rough start. For the second straight year, the starting quarterback was injured. A year ago it occurred during a workout. This time, Ryan Willis suffered an injured wrist in a very Kansas way: playing pickup basketball.

Willis started eight games last season and showed promise at times, throwing nine touchdown passes. The 6-4 sophomore passed for 330 yards in a loss to Texas Tech.

Still on the roster is redshirt junior Montell Cozart, who started the last two years at quarterback but didn't finish in the same role. The quarterbacks will be coached by the same person who will call the offensive plays–Beaty.

"Offensively, my name's on it," Beaty says. "I enjoy doing that. It's kind of what I got into the business for, and I think it can help us."

That wasn't the only piece of offseason coaching news. Five assistant coaches had to be replaced.

As for the roster, newcomers have no choice but to make an impact. Wide receiver LaQuvionte Gonzalez arrives as a transfer from Texas A&M, where he had 26 receptions in two seasons playing for Beaty, the Aggies' receivers coach at the time.

The defensive tackle position will receive a boost from Isi Holani and Deelsaac Davis, ranked among the top 20 at their position among junior-college transfers. Cornerback Stephan Robinson, also a juco newcomer, figures to play a key role.

Joe Dineen Jr. is a solid linebacker who will be counted on for leadership, as will one of the best names in college football, safety Fish Smithson, who led the Big 12 in tackles last season. Smithson averaged 10.1 tackles per game, and the Jayhawks would be better served if that number by a second-level defender was reduced this season.

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PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Rhode Island	
S.10	Ohio	
S.17	@MEMPHIS	23-55
S.29	@TEXAS TECH	20-30
O.8	TCU	17-23
O.15	@BAYLOR	7-66
O.22	Oklahoma State	10-58
O.29	@OKLAHOMA	7-62
N.5	@WEST VIRGINIA	0-49
N.12	Iowa State	13-38
N.19	Texas	20-59
N.26	@KANSAS STATE	14-45

COACH

David Beaty
Second year (0-12)
CAREER RECORD: 0-12

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Rob Likens (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Clint Bowen (third year)
Kenny Perry (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 0-12
STADIUM: Memorial Stadium (50,071)
TICKETS: 800-34-HAWKS
SITE: Lawrence, Kan.
WEBSITE: kuathletics.com
TWITTER: @KU_Football

PROJECTED FINISH

EAST DIVISION

1. **Western Kentucky**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Independence Bowl
2. **Marshall**
   BOWL PROJECTION: New Orleans Bowl
3. **Middle Tennessee**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Bahamas Bowl
4. **Florida Atlantic**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Boca Raton Bowl
5. **Old Dominion**
6. **Florida International**
7. **Charlotte**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Southern Miss**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Heart of Dallas Bowl
2. **Louisiana Tech**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Arizona Bowl
3. **Rice**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Hawaii Bowl
4. **UTEP**
   BOWL PROJECTION: New Mexico Bowl
5. **UTSA**
6. **North Texas**

Richie James, WR, Middle Tennessee

Anthony Wales, RB, Western Kentucky

Even without Doughty, Hilltoppers the team to beat

BY MICHAEL GRANT
Louisville Courier-Journal

Conference USA was top-heavy in 2015, but the teams at the top sparkled for the league. It went 3-2 in bowl games and its winning percentage (.600) was second only to the Southeastern Conference (.800). Over the past five years, C-USA is 18-8 in bowl games. However, C-USA was only able to fill five of its seven guaranteed bowl bids. In 2016, it will have six. Will it be able to easily fill all of them? Right now, five teams look like shoo-ins for the postseason.

Western Kentucky carried the banner for the league, going 12-2 and finishing the year No. 24 in the Associated Press Top 25 Poll. It was the first time the former FCS program has been ranked since it became a full-fledged FBS program in 2009. The Hilltoppers lose record-setting quarterback Brandon Doughty, but coach Jeff Brohm is back. Assuming they find a suitable successor to Doughty, they still look like the team to beat. Western Kentucky has 11 straight victories in conference play—the longest such streak in the FBS. It has a shot at the C-USA record of 14 set by Southern Miss from Oct. 10, 1998, to Nov. 4, 2000.

The biggest threats to WKU are Southern Miss, Marshall and Middle Tennessee. Exactly who will emerge from that group is difficult to assess. They all have question marks but will likely be bowl bound again this year. Southern Miss has the league's best returning quarterback in Nick Mullens. Middle Tennessee has the best young quarterback in sophomore Brent Stockstill. And Marshall sophomore Chase Litton showed promise last season. Mullens (38 touchdowns), Stockstill (30) and Litton (23) ranked fourth, 12th and 30th, respectively, in FBS touchdown passes.

There will be three new coaches in the league: Jay Hopson at Southern Miss, Seth Littrell at North Texas and Frank Wilson at UTSA. Hopson has the best chance for early success thanks to Mullens.

Conference USA will be a 13-team league for the second straight year but will expand to 14 in 2017 when UAB returns. The Blazers reinstated football in June 2015 six months after dropping the program. They will be eligible for postseason competition immediately.

JAMES: BRADLEY LEEB / AP; WALES: LYNNE SLADKY / AP

TRENDING

THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1. **Can WKU replace Brandon Doughty?** A bunched-up group of four are in contention. It's unlikely that any of them will play as well as Doughty—the greatest passer in school history and one of the best in the history of the league.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Chad Carson, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Marshall	29	0	1	14	166.45
2	UAB	45	0	0	21	159.92
3	Louisiana Tech	20	0	0	10	129.41
4	Middle Tennessee	21	0	0	11	127.79
5	Southern Miss	18	0	0	9	126.49
6	Western Kentucky	19	0	0	8	125.93
7	Florida Atlantic	19	0	0	8	125.69
8	Old Dominion	23	0	0	7	118.75
9	Florida International	25	0	0	5	117.22
10	UTSA	17	0	0	7	108.05
11	Charlotte	16	0	0	6	108.02
12	North Texas	17	0	0	5	107.80
13	UTEP	24	0	0	3	105.17
14	Rice	18	0	0	2	94.39

ALL-CONFERENCE USA

OFFENSE

- QB **Nick Mullens,** Sr., Southern Miss
- RB **Anthony Wales,** Sr., Western Kentucky
- RB **Ray Lawry,** Jr., Old Dominion
- OL **Forrest Lamp,** Sr., Western Kentucky
- OL **Cameron Tom,** Sr., Southern Miss
- OL **Michael Montero,** Sr., Florida International
- OL **Reggie Bain,** Jr., Florida Atlantic
- OL **Darrell Brown,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- TE **Jonnu Smith,** Sr., Florida International
- WR **Trent Taylor,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- WR **Richie James,** So., Middle Tennessee

DEFENSE

- DL **Trey Hendrickson,** Sr., Florida Atlantic
- DL **Larry Ogunjobi,** Sr., Charlotte
- DL **Gary Thompson,** Sr., Marshall
- DL **Dylan Bradley,** Sr., Southern Miss
- LB **TJ Ricks,** Sr., Old Dominion
- LB **Alex Lyons,** Sr., Rice
- LB **Alvin Jones,** Jr., UTEP
- DB **Michael Egwuagu,** Sr., UTSA
- DB **Xavier Woods,** Sr., Louisiana Tech
- DB **Jeremy Cutrer,** Sr., Middle Tennessee
- DB **Tiquan Lang,** Sr., Marshall

SPECIALISTS

- K **Trevor Moore,** So., North Texas
- P **Dalton Schomp,** Sr., Florida Atlantic

MULLENS: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP

NEWSMAKER

Southern Miss QB **Nick Mullens** was the league's 2015 Offensive Player of the Year after directing the second-best offense in C-USA. He led the team to a six-win improvement and broke several of the school's single-season passing records. As a senior, it might be tough to exceed some of the numbers he put up last year (4,476 yards, 38 touchdowns). If he cuts down on his interceptions (12), the Golden Eagles could win 10 games.

OVERRATED

LOUISIANA TECH

The Bulldogs have a lot of question marks at quarterback and must replace star tailback Kenneth Dixon. The division doesn't seem like it will be tough but it will be a challenge to get to eight victories.

UNDERRATED

MIDDLE TENNESSEE

The Blue Raiders return quarterback Brent Stockstill, the 2015 C-USA Freshman of the Year. They bring back two of their best wide receivers, including Richie James, who was third in the nation in catches (108) as a freshman.

2 How will Jay Hopson do in his first season at Southern Miss? The former Alcorn State head coach has the advantages of a senior quarterback in Nick Mullens and a manageable schedule.

3 When will Charlotte win its first C-USA game? Last year, the 49ers went 0-8 in their first season in the league.

RATING C-USA

FASTEST RECEIVER
Carlos Henderson, Louisiana Tech
Henderson has been a speed threat from Day One. He averaged 21.5 yards per catch last season and is a special-teams ace on kickoffs.

BEST HANDS
Richie James, WR, Middle Tennessee
Was third in the nation in receptions with 108 as a freshman last year.

BEST PASSING QB
Nick Mullens, Southern Miss
As a junior, he was sixth the nation in passing yards (4,476) and fourth in TD passes (38).

BEST RUNNING QB
David Washington, Old Dominion
Assuming he comes back healthy from a knee injury, he should improve upon his 40 carries for 131 yards.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Anthony Wales, Western Kentucky
He exploded after some early injury problems in 2015, averaging 7.0 yards per carry.

BEST INSTINCTS
Ito Smith, RB, Southern Miss
He's an all-purpose threat, rushing 171 times for 1,128 yards and catching 49 passes for 515 yards and scoring 13 total touchdowns.

BEST ATHLETE
Taywan Taylor, WR, Western Kentucky
He has a great combination of lower-body strength, agility and speed to finish third in the nation in receiving yards (1,467).

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Brent Stockstill, QB, Middle Tennessee
It's tough enough to play as a freshman. It's even tougher to excel when you're the coach's son. He was C-USA's Freshman of the Year.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Forrest Lamp, LT, Western Kentucky
Lamp has been an impact player since his redshirt-freshman season.

TOP FRESHMAN
Jaquan Yulee, LB, Marshall
Four-star linebacker recruit was a one-time Alabama commit.

HARDEST HITTER
Trey Hendrickson, DL, Florida Atlantic
He forced five fumbles in 12 games.

BEST PASS RUSHER
Trey Hendrickson, DL, Florida Atlantic
His 13.5 sacks were second most in the nation.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Jowan Davis, RB, Rice
The 5-7 scatback slumped a bit as a junior but one of the league's smallest players still averaged 4.2 yards per carry.

BEST INTERVIEW
Doc Holliday, Marshall
At 59, he still has great enthusiasm and passion for the game.

BEST COACH
Jeff Brohm, Western Kentucky
Built one of the greatest offenses in league history. Can he continue to have success without former quarterback Brandon Doughty? Yeah, probably.

LOUDEST STADIUM
Joan C. Edwards Stadium, Marshall
The stadium has the most tradition-rich atmosphere in the conference.

TOP SCHOLAR
Lee McNeill, QB, Charlotte
Recorded a perfect 4.0 GPA in seven of his first eight semesters while working toward his business management degree.

WESTERN KENTUCKY
HILLTOPPERS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

WR Taywan Taylor

One of the bigger surprises in college football was Jeff Brohm returning as head coach at Western Kentucky. Brohm has been one of the hottest names out there with an attractive résumé for a big-time college program. And yet, he'll be back for his third season after being mentioned as a candidate at Virginia and South Carolina.

Brohm has lifted WKU to unprecedented heights by winning the 2015 Conference USA championship and winning two bowl games. The Hilltoppers finished last season ranked No. 24 in the final Associated Press Top 25 and became the first C-USA school in the league's 20-year history to go undefeated in conference play and win the league championship game. Brohm has built an exciting style with WKU finishing third in the nation in scoring (44.3 points per game) and ninth in total offense (526.4 yards per game).

That was all with Brandon Doughty as his quarterback. Doughty, who led the FBS in passing yards (5,055) and touchdown passes (48) last season, is gone to the NFL. The Hilltoppers will have considerable uncertainty at quarterback with a competition that will include last year's backup, Nelson Fishback, South Florida transfer Mike White, former Louisville and Penn State quarterback Tyler Ferguson and sophomore Drew Eckels.

Fishback has experience in the system but hasn't played much. White was a two-year starter at South Florida. Ferguson has limited playing experience, as does Eckels. The good news is whoever plays quarterback will be surrounded by excellent skill players.

The Hilltoppers could have one of the deepest backfields in the country. Anthony Wales shook off an early-season injury to rush for 1,091 yards and nine touchdowns in 11 games. He was called into action after star tailback Leon Allen suffered a season-ending knee injury after two games. Allen (1,542 rushing yards in 2014) was granted a medical hardship waiver and will return. The Hilltoppers also return D'Andre Ferby, who led the team in rushing scores with 11.

The receiving corps should be stellar again, highlighted by deep threats Taywan Taylor (86 catches, 1,467 yards, 17 touchdowns) and Nicholas Norris (63, 971, 6). Taylor was third in the FBS in receiving yards and second in touchdown catches.

As expected, WKU's defense was vastly improved from 2014 when it was one of the worst in the FBS. The Hilltoppers were second in the league in holding opponents to a 35.2-percent third-down conversion rate. They also forced a conference-best 31 turnovers. Linebacker T.J. McCollum, a UAB transfer, was an immediate-impact player with 106 tackles and should be again.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Rice	49-10
S.10	@ALABAMA	
S.17	@MIAMI (OHIO)	56-14
S.24	Vanderbilt	14-12
O.1	Houston Baptist	
O.8	@LOUISIANA TECH	41-38
O.15	@MIDDLE TENN.	58-28
O.22	Old Dominion	55-30
O.29	@FLA. ATLANTIC	35-19
N.5	Florida International	63-7
N.12	North Texas	55-28
N.26	@MARSHALL	49-28

COACH

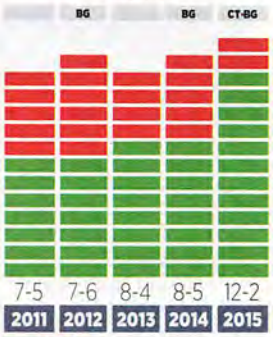
Jeff Brohm
Third year (20-7)
CAREER RECORD: 20-7

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeff Brohm (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Nick Holt (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 12-2
(Beat South Florida in the Miami Beach Bowl, 45-35)
STADIUM: Houchens Industries-L.T. Smith Stadium (22,113)
TICKETS: 1-800-5-BIG-RED
SITE: Bowling Green, Ky.
WEBSITE: wkusports.com
TWITTER: @WKUFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
42-22



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Mike White** (6-4, 210, Jr.)
RB	**Anthony Wales** (5-10, 195, Sr.)
LT	**Forrest Lamp** (6-4, 300, Sr.)
LG	**Brandon Ray** (6-2, 285, Jr.)
C	**Max Halpin** (6-3, 295, Sr.)
RG	**Dennis Edwards** (6-1, 305, So.)
RT	**Darrell Williams** (6-6, 310, Sr.)
TE	**Shaquille Johnson** (6-4, 235, Sr.)
WR	**Taywan Taylor** (6-1, 195, Sr.)
WR	**Nicholas Norris** (5-9, 175, Sr.)
WR	**Nacarius Fant** (5-9, 185, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Derik Overstreet** (6-2, 250, Jr.)
DT	**Chris Johnson** (6-2, 290, Jr.)
DT	**Omarius Bryant** (6-3, 310, Sr.)
DE	**Nick Dawson-Brents** (6-3, 260, Sr.)
LB	**T.J. McCollum** (6-3, 230, Jr.)
LB	**Keith Brown** (6-1, 235, Sr.)
LB	**Joel Iyiegbuniwe** (6-2, 220, So.)
CB	**Joe Brown** (5-10, 190, Jr.)
CB	**De'Andre Simmons** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
FS	**Branden Leston** (6-3, 205, Sr.)
SS	**Marcus Ward** (6-3, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Ryan Nuss** (5-10, 190, So.)
P	**Joseph Occhipinti** (6-3, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

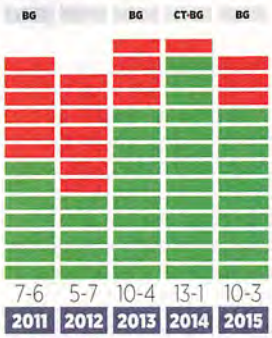
1. **Quinton Baker,** RB ★★★
2. **Jeremy Darvin,** DT ★★★
3. **Xavier Lane,** WR ★★★

Running back Quinton Baker committed to Kentucky and Marshall before flipping to Western and enrolling early, and he's already flashed his talent and speed in spring practice. Coach Jeff Brohm even claims Baker ran a sub-4.3 40 at one of WKU's camps. He highlights a group of promising offensive skill-position players who will look to keep the high-powered offense among the NCAA's best.

TAYLOR: JONATHAN BACHMAN / AP

MARSHALL
THUNDERING HERD

5-YEAR RECORD
45-21



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

TE Ryan Yurachek

YURACHEK: CHRIS O'MEARA / AP

It's a credit to Marshall that it went through a season of transition in 2015 and still had the league's second-best overall record. Veteran coach Doc Holliday continues to recruit well and find the right pieces. The Thundering Herd is 20-4 in conference play over the past three seasons with three bowl victories.

The best news was that Marshall was able to find a young quarterback. Chase Litton started 11 games as a freshman after Marshall benched James Madison transfer Michael Birdsong following a 21-10 loss at Ohio. In Litton's first start, he became the first Marshall freshman to pass for four touchdowns in a debut–a 45-7 rout of Norfolk State. Litton finished the season with 23 touchdown passes to eight interceptions.

For Litton to continue to grow, he will need help from his receivers. None of the top four receivers averaged more than 12.6 yards per reception. The team's fifth-leading receiver, Justin Hunt (20 catches, 4 TDs), showed some promise. Deon-Tay McManus (35 receptions) had a disappointing sophomore campaign but the former four-star recruit has talent.

Offensively, Marshall's biggest concern is a running game that struggled at times when Devon Johnson was hurt during the season. Hyleck Foster, a converted wide receiver, provided a spark. Junior Tony Pittman, redshirt freshman Delvin Weems and true freshman JaQua Daniels could pitch in.

Marshall boasted the league's best defense in terms of total yards allowed (360.0 per game) and points surrendered (17.8). The Herd should be good again especially with two key additions. Four-star linebacker recruit Jaquan Yulee was a one-time Alabama commit. Now, he's arguably C-USA's top incoming recruit. Another immediate player should be junior-college transfer C.J. Reavis, who once played at Virginia Tech. Reavis is expected to start at safety for the Herd.

Among the returnees on defense, lineman Gary Thompson was an honorable mention all-conference selection. He led the team with 12.5 tackles for loss and was second in the league with nine sacks and tied the conference lead with five forced fumbles.

The secondary was dealt a blow when cornerback Corey Tindal declared for the NFL Draft with a year of eligibility remaining. However, safety Tiquan Lang is back. He famously returned a pair of interceptions for touchdowns against Purdue. Lang was second on the team in tackles (91).

Marshall has built the most consistent program in C-USA. Now that the quarterback position is solidified, the Herd should continue to be a threat for the league championship.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Chase Litton (6-6, 207, So.)
RB	Hyleck Foster (5-11, 185, Jr.)
LT	Sandley Jean-Felix (6-5, 317, Jr.)
LG	Jordan Dowrey (6-1, 297, So.)
C	Michael Selby (6-2, 283, Sr.)
RG	Cody Collins (6-1, 275, Jr.)
RT	Clint Van Horn (6-5, 314, Sr.)
TE	Ryan Yurachek (6-3, 233, Jr.)
WR	Justin Hunt (6-3, 203, Sr.)
WR	Deon-Tay McManus (6-1, 228, Jr.)
WR	Michael Clark (6-7, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ryan Bee (6-7, 263, So.)
DT	Tomell One (6-3, 275, Jr.)
DT	Jason Smith (6-3, 296, So.)
DE	Gary Thompson (6-1, 252, Sr.)
LB	Chase Hancock (6-2, 207, So.)
LB	Devontre'a Tyler (6-2, 240, Sr.)
LB	Frankie Hernandez (6-2, 201, So.)
CB	Rodney Allen (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	Antavis Rowe (5-11, 167, Jr.)
FS	Tiquan Lang (5-8, 170, Sr.)
SS	C.J. Reavis (6-1, 205, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Nick Smith (5-10, 175, Jr.)
P	Kaare Vedvik (6-4, 200, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Jaquan Yulee,** LB ★★★★
2. **Xavier Gaines,** QB ★★★
3. **Pro Wells,** TE ★★★

Marshall continued its run of top classes in Conference USA with a group led by former Alabama commit Jaquan Yulee. The state of Florida was again good to the Thundering Herd with more than a third of the class hailing from the Sunshine State, led by speedy dual-threat quarterback Xavier Gaines and tight end Pro Wells.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.10	Morgan State	
S.17	Akron	
S.24	Louisville	
O.1	@PITTSBURGH	
O.8	@NORTH TEXAS	30-13
O.15	Florida Atlantic	33-17
O.22	Charlotte	34-10
O.29	@SOUTHERN MISS	31-10
N.5	@OLD DOMINION	27-7
N.12	Middle Tennessee	24-27
N.19	@FLORIDA INTL.	52-0
N.26	Western Kentucky	28-49

COACH

Doc Holliday
Seventh year (50-28)
CAREER RECORD: 50-28

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Bill Legg (seventh year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Chuck Heater (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Connecticut in the St. Petersburg Bowl, 16-10)
STADIUM: Joan C. Edwards Stadium (38,227)
TICKETS: 800-THE-HERD
SITE: Huntington, W.Va.
WEBSITE: herdzone.com
TWITTER: @HerdFB

3 MIDDLE TENNESSEE
BLUE RAIDERS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Alabama A&M	
S.10	@VANDERBILT	13-17
S.17	@BOWLING GREEN	
S.24	Louisiana Tech	16-45
O.1	@NORTH TEXAS	41-7
O.15	Western Kentucky	28-58
O.22	@MISSOURI	
O.29	@FLORIDA INTL.	42-34
N.5	UTSA	42-7
N.12	@MARSHALL	27-24
N.19	@CHARLOTTE	73-14
N.26	Florida Atlantic	24-17

COACH

Rick Stockstill
11th year (64-61)
CAREER RECORD: 64-61

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tony Franklin (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tyrone Nix (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Western Michigan in the Bahamas Bowl, 45-31)
STADIUM: Johnny "Red" Floyd Stadium (30,788)
TICKETS: 888-YES-MTSU
SITE: Murfreesboro, Tenn.
WEBSITE: goblueraiders.com
TWITTER: @MT_FB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Brent Stockstill (6-0, 209, So.)
RB	Shane Tucker (6-0, 205, Sr.)
LT	Carlos Johnson (6-3, 316, So.)
LG	Josh Chester (6-3, 302, Sr.)
C	Daniel Stephens (6-2, 306, Sr.)
RG	Chandler Brewer (6-6, 315, So.)
RT	Maurquice Shakir (6-3, 316, Sr.)
TE	Terry Pettis (6-5, 240, Sr.)
WR	Richie James (5-9, 177, So.)
WR	Demetrius Frazier (5-10, 198, Sr.)
WR	Rod Ducksworth (6-0, 176, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jahmal Jones (6-3, 243, Jr.)
DT	Jimal McBride (6-2, 320, Sr.)
DT	Shaquille Huff (6-1, 329, Sr.)
DE	Chris Hale (6-4, 256, Sr.)
LB	D.J. Sanders (6-0, 215, Jr.)
LB	Darius Harris (6-2, 213, So.)
LB	Chris Melton (6-1, 206, So.)
CB	Jeremy Cutrer (6-2, 170, Sr.)
CB	Michael Minter (6-0, 172, Jr.)
FS	Alex Dale (5-10, 193, Jr.)
SS	Chris Brown (6-1, 172, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Canon Rooker (5-11, 182, Jr.)
P	Matt Bonadies (6-1, 204, So.)

Sporting News All-American

In the Stockstills, the Blue Raiders trust. Coach Rick Stockstill installed his freshman son as the quarterback and the program's future looks bright. Brent Stockstill guided Middle Tennessee to a second-place tie in the East along with Marshall. The Blue Raiders played in the Bahamas Bowl after missing out on the postseason in 2014.

Brent Stockstill was named the C-USA Freshman of the Year. He led all freshmen in the nation in passing yards (4,005) and was 12th overall. Stockstill also led all national freshmen in TD passes (30) while setting single-season school records for passes, completions and yards. He'll be the second-most accomplished returning quarterback in C-USA. Stockstill could be even better this season with a new offensive coordinator. In one of the most curious moves of the offseason, Tony Franklin left his coordinator job at California to return to Middle Tennessee, where he was an assistant in 2009. Franklin cited family reasons.

Whatever the reason, Brent Stockstill should be a big beneficiary. Franklin worked with standout QB Jared Goff at Cal and his offense has been ranked in the top 10 nationally the past four years in passing, twice in total offense and twice in scoring. In C-USA, Middle Tennessee will need to get the most out of its quarterback to compete with Western Kentucky, Southern Miss, Louisiana Tech and Marshall.

Brent Stockstill will also have one of the league's top wide receivers back. Stockstill wasn't Middle Tennessee's only freshman sensation. Richie James was third in the FBS in receptions (108) and was 10th in receiving yards (1,346) and added eight touchdowns. James capped off his freshman campaign with eight catches for 126 yards and three touchdowns (two receiving, one rushing) in the 45-31 loss to Western Michigan in the Bahamas Bowl.

4 FLORIDA ATLANTIC
OWLS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Southern Illinois	
S.10	@MIAMI (FLA.)	20-44
S.17	@KANSAS STATE	
S.24	Ball State	
O.1	@FLORIDA INTL.	31-17
O.8	Charlotte	17-7
O.15	@MARSHALL	17-33
O.29	Western Kentucky	19-35
N.5	@RICE	26-27
N.12	UTEP	17-27
N.19	Old Dominion	33-31
N.26	@MIDDLE TENN.	17-24

COACH

Charlie Partridge
Third year (6-18)
CAREER RECORD: 6-18

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Travis Trickett (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Roc Bellantoni (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: FAU Stadium (29,419)
TICKETS: 866-FAU-OWLS
SITE: Boca Raton, Fla.
WEBSITE: fausports.com
TWITTER: @FAU_football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Jason Driskel (6-2, 210, So.)
RB	Greg Howell (6-1, 215, Jr.)
LT	Reggie Bain (6-4, 295, Jr.)
LG	Siffo Pierre (6-4, 310, So.)
C	Dillon DeBoer (6-6, 295, Sr.)
RG	Jakobi Smith (6-3, 300, Jr.)
RT	Kelly Parfitt (6-6, 313, Sr.)
TE	Nate Terry (6-6, 210, Jr.)
WR	Henry Bussey (5-9, 180, Jr.)
WR	Kalib Woods (6-3, 193, Jr.)
WR	Kamrin Solomon (6-2, 205, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Hunter Snyder (6-7, 260, So.)
DT	Shalom Ogbonda (6-4, 290, Sr.)
DT	Ray Ellis (6-1, 285, Jr.)
DE	Trey Hendrickson (6-4, 270, Sr.)
LB	Ocie Rose (6-2, 190, So.)
LB	Nate Ozdemir (6-2, 230, Jr.)
LB	Azeez Al-Shaair (6-2, 215, So.)
CB	Herb Miller (6-2, 190, So.)
CB	Shelton Lewis (6-0, 171, So.)
FS	Jalen Young (5-11, 185, So.)
SS	Andrew Soroh (6-2, 210, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Greg Joseph (6-1, 210, Sr.)
P	Dalton Schomp (6-1, 220, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Florida Atlantic certainly wasn't dull last season. The Owls were the unluckiest team in the league last year. They went 1-4 in games decided by one score, losing their first four. Two of those games were in overtime and the season opener set the tone: a 47-44 overtime defeat at Tulsa. They somehow managed to lose a game in which they rushed for 300 yards and possessed the ball for 37 minutes.

And that wasn't even FAU's worst overtime heartbreak. The Owls had a chance to upset No. 8 Florida but lost 20-14 in Gainesville. The team finally won a close game when it squeezed by Old Dominion, 33-31, in the season finale.

Coach Charlie Partridge is in his third year since arriving from Arkansas. Perhaps now he has the talent and experience (8 returning starters on offense, 7 on defense) to challenge for a bowl appearance. The program hasn't played in the postseason since 2008 when Howard Schnellenberger was in charge.

The defense should be the team's strength, especially the pass rush. The Owls were tied for 13th in the nation in sacks per game (2.92) and totaled 35. Good luck trying to stop defensive end Trey Hendrickson, who was second in the FBS with 13.5 sacks. His best performance came against Florida with two sacks, a forced fumble and a blocked extra point. Linebacker Azeez Al-Shaair was a *USA Today* Freshman All-America selection after leading the Owls in tackles (94).

The key to FAU's season will be improving the offense. The Owls averaged 22.5 points per game and had 12 touchdown passes to 12 interceptions. There's a new offensive coordinator at the helm as Travis Trickett joins the staff. He was formerly Samford's offensive coordinator. The FCS Bulldogs averaged 34.6 points per game and 479.7 yards per game last year. Sophomore Jason Driskel and redshirt frosh Daniel Parr will battle to be the starting QB.

5 OLD DOMINION
MONARCHS

Old Dominion's second season in C-USA was probably a slight disappointment. After going 6-6 (4-4 in league play) in 2014, the Monarchs had a mostly forgettable year. Their three league victories were against three of the conference's worst teams: UTEP, UTSA and Charlotte. Against the league's three best teams–Western Kentucky, Southern Miss and Marshall–they were outscored 138-68.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Hampton
S.10	@APP. STATE
S.17	@N.C. STATE
S.24	UTSA
O.1	@CHARLOTTE
O.8	Massachusetts
O.22	@W. KENTUCKY
O.29	@UTEP
N.5	Marshall
N.12	Southern Miss
N.19	@FLA. ATLANTIC
N.26	Florida Intl.

Still, Old Dominion was playing for bowl eligibility in its regular-season finale. But it could not hold a 24-3 first-half lead at home against Florida Atlantic and lost 33-31.

The good news for the Monarchs in 2016 is that their 17 returning starters are seasoned and battle-ready. The offense is best when it goes through junior tailback Ray Lawry, who was the league's top rusher (1,136 yards and 11 touchdowns). He was hampered in the final three games of the season, however, due to a foot injury.

Coach Bobby Wilder needs to settle on a quarterback. Last season, freshman Shuler Bentley started the first six games. He was later replaced by David Washington, who switched from wide receiver to quarterback as a junior. Washington played a key role in the three conference victories but suffered a season-ending knee injury against Southern Miss. He is expected to be healthy for the fall. From a pass-efficiency standpoint, Washington was the better of the two (131.3 to Bentley's 107.0) and is much more mobile. Old Dominion has a dynamic receiver in Zach Pascal (68 catches, 970 yards, 8 TDs), who was virtually unstoppable in the last five games (42, 608, 5).

QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 5-7

COACH: Bobby Wilder (eighth year, 57-27)
CAREER RECORD: 57-27
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian Scott (eighth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Rich Nagy (fourth year)
STADIUM: Foreman Field (20,118)
TICKETS: 757-683-4444
SITE: Norfolk, Va.
WEBSITE: odusports.com
TWITTER: @ODUFootball

6 FLORIDA INTL.
PANTHERS

This will only be Ron Turner's fourth season as coach at Florida International but it seems like he has spent his entire time there on the coaching hot seat. When the former Illinois head coach first got the job, there was considerable criticism of the hire. That won't subside until Turner has a breakthrough season.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.1	Indiana
S.9	Maryland
S.17	@MASSACHUSETTS
S.24	UCF
O.1	Florida Atlantic
O.8	@UTEP
O.15	@CHARLOTTE
O.22	Louisiana Tech
O.29	Middle Tennessee
N.5	@W. KENTUCKY
N.19	Marshall
N.26	@OLD DOMINION

Give Turner some credit. The Panthers have steadily improved going from 1-11 to 4-8 to 5-7. They were 5-5 and in position to get bowl eligible but were clobbered in the season's final two games against two of the league's best teams: 52-0 at Marshall and 63-7 at home to Western Kentucky.

Most of FIU's offense is back, highlighted by junior quarterback Alex McGough. He's the league's fourth-leading returning passer after throwing for 2,722 yards with 21 touchdowns and eight interceptions. This is his third year in Turner's system so he is expected to improve. The big question is can the offensive line protect him? The unit was limited due to injuries last year but junior guard Jordan Budwig (missed the entire 2015 season due to a shoulder injury) is back as well as second-team all-conference senior center Michael Montero.

McGough has one of the better tight ends in the nation. Senior Jonnu Smith (36 catches, 397 yards, 4 TDs) missed the final four games with a sprained knee. He sustained his injury during a career day when he hauled in 10 receptions for 183 yards against Old Dominion. He broke his own single-game school record for receiving yards for a tight end. Junior tailback Alex Gardner is an all-purpose threat. Last year, he rushed for 760 yards and nine scores and caught 60 passes.

QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 5-7

COACH: Ron Turner (fourth year, 10-26)
CAREER RECORD: 52-87
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Shankweiler (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt House (second year)
STADIUM: FIU Stadium (20,000)
TICKETS: 305-FIU-GAME
SITE: Miami
WEBSITE: fiusports.com
TWITTER: @FIUFootball

7 CHARLOTTE
49ERS

Charlotte's first year in the FBS as a C-USA member was full of growing pains. The 49ers ended the season on a 10-game losing streak and only two of those games were decided by under double digits. Charlotte was outscored by 18.7 points per game in 2015.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.1	@LOUISVILLE
S.10	Elon
S.17	Eastern Michigan
S.24	@TEMPLE
O.1	Old Dominion
O.8	@FLA. ATLANTIC
O.15	Florida Intl.
O.22	@MARSHALL
N.5	@SOUTHERN MISS
N.12	Rice
N.19	Middle Tennessee
N.26	@UTSA

Brad Lambert has been the only coach at Charlotte since the inception of football there in 2013. He's 12-22, but there figures to still be patience as he tries to build the 49ers. He has 17 returning starters–nine on offense and eight on defense.

Tailback Kalif Phillips was fifth in the league in rushing yards per game (87.4) and averaged 5.1 yards per carry. The second-team all-conference selection was hindered due to injury and totaled just 10 yards over the final three games. Former quarterback Matt Johnson (327 rushing yards) is switching to running back and will operate in Wildcat formations.

Charlotte needs to find a quarterback after starting three in 2015 with poor results. The 49ers didn't have anyone ranked among the top 10 in passing yards and totaled just 12 touchdown passes for the season. Lee McNeill passed for the most yards (878) but threw 10 interceptions to one touchdown and has a suspect arm. Two incoming players could factor in the quarterback race: junior-college transfer Kevin Olsen, the brother of Carolina Panthers tight end Greg Olsen, and East Carolina graduate transfer Cody Keith. Olsen is an intriguing option. He was originally a four-star recruit who redshirted at the University of Miami in 2013.

Charlotte's top four receivers are back, led by senior Austin Duke (53 catches, 534 yards, 5 TDs).

QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 2-10

COACH: Brad Lambert (fourth year, 12-22)
CAREER RECORD: 12-22
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeff Mullen (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt Wallerstedt (second year)
STADIUM: Jerry Richardson Stadium (15,000)
TICKETS: 704-687-4949
SITE: Charlotte
ONLINE: charlotte49ers.com
TWITTER: @Charlotte49erFB

SOUTHERN MISS
GOLDEN EAGLES

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Ito Smith

Southern Miss was one of the league's biggest surprises last season, but that success cost the program its coach. Picked to finish fourth in the West, the Golden Eagles won the division and earned a trip to the Heart of Dallas Bowl. However, coach Todd Monken left in late January to be the offensive coordinator for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. This is a familiar lament for Southern Miss, which lost Larry Fedora to North Carolina after he guided the team to a 12-2 record in 2011. The program fell apart when Fedora left, plummeting to 0-12 the next season.

This time, Southern Miss hopes the transition will be smoother. Former Alcorn State coach Jay Hopson takes over. He has ties to the Golden Eagles (he was a defensive assistant in Hattiesburg from 2001-03 and 2005-07). It also should help to have a senior quarterback in Nick Mullens. Mullens was last year's C-USA Offensive Player of the Year. He finished sixth in the nation in passing yards (4,476) and tied for fourth in passing touchdowns (38). The senior should be the front-runner for the league's preseason Player of the Year. But how much will the offense change under a new coach?

The new offensive coordinator is Shannon Dawson, the former Kentucky assistant. Dawson was the fall guy for the Wildcats' 5-7 season. Interestingly, Southern Miss will open its season against UK in Lexington. He had success prior to Kentucky when he was West Virginia's offensive coordinator. And now, Dawson has the league's best quarterback.

Mullens should have enough weapons to be successful. All-C-USA tailback Jalen Richard is gone but junior tailback Ito Smith was the team's top rusher (1,128 yards, 10 touchdowns) and averaged 6.6 yards per carry. Smith is also a good receiver (49 catches, 515 yards, 3 TDs).

At wide receiver, Southern Miss will be looking for someone to replace the departed Mike Thomas. Junior-college wideout and former Florida State player Isaiah Jones might be a viable replacement. Senior D.J. Thompson (55 catches, 779 yards, 6 TDs) could expand his role and Marquise Ricard missed last year due to injury.

Defensively, Southern Miss was second best in the league in points allowed (25.6 per game) and third in total yards allowed (379.5). Top pass rusher Dylan Bradley (6.5 sacks, 12.5 tackles for loss) and Xavier Thigpen (4.5 sacks) should help the Golden Eagles get after the quarterback. Safety D'Nerius Antoine, who led the team in tackles (103), will shift to linebacker at times to provide more versatility.

Repeating as the division winner won't be easy, but the Golden Eagles have enough quality players and a friendly schedule.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@KENTUCKY	
S.10	Savannah State	
S.17	Troy	
S.24	@UTEP	34-13
O.1	Rice	65-10
O.8	@UTSA	32-10
O.15	@LSU	
O.29	Marshall	10-31
N.5	Charlotte	44-10
N.12	@OLD DOMINION	56-31
N.19	@NORTH TEXAS	49-14
N.26	Louisiana Tech	58-24

COACH

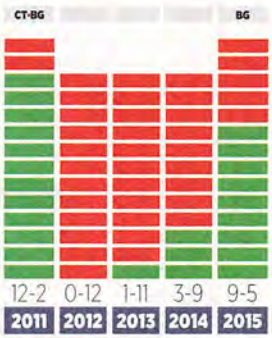
Jay Hopson
First year
CAREER RECORD: 32-17

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Wozniak (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: David Duggan (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-5
(Lost to Washington in the Heart of Dallas Bowl, 44-31)
STADIUM: M.M. Roberts Stadium (36,000)
TICKETS: 800-844-TICK
SITE: Hattiesburg, Miss.
WEBSITE: southernmiss.com
TWITTER: @SouthernMissFB

5-YEAR RECORD
25-39



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Nick Mullens (6-1, 196, Sr.)
RB	Ito Smith (5-9, 195, Jr.)
LT	Tyler Stutzman (6-4, 275, Jr.)
LG	Brandon Farmer (6-2, 308, Sr.)
C	Cameron Tom (6-4, 287, Sr.)
RG	Oliver Bates (6-2, 295, Sr.)
RT	Jacob Fleming (6-4, 302, Sr.)
TE	Ricky Parks (6-3, 270, Sr.)
WR	Korey Robertson (6-1, 210, So.)
WR	Reid Rials (6-1, 185, Fr.)
WR	D.J. Thompson (6-3, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Darian Yancey (6-1, 250, So.)
DT	Draper Riley (6-4, 289, Jr.)
DL	LaDarius Harris (6-1, 280, So.)
DE	Dylan Bradley (6-1, 265, Sr.)
LB	Jeremy Sangster (6-0, 233, So.)
LB	Elijah Parker (6-2, 220, Sr.)
LB	Sherrod Ruff (5-10, 215, Jr.)
CB	Cornell Armstrong (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	Trae Collins (5-11, 184, Jr.)
FS	D'Nerius Antoine (6-0, 215, Sr.)
SS	Picasso Nelson Jr. (5-10, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Stephen Brauchle (6-1, 205, Sr.)
P	Tyler Sarrazin (6-3, 204, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING
1 **Jacorey Morris,** LB ★★★
2 **Keon Howard,** QB ★★★
3 **Racheem Booth,** LB ★★★

One of the Golden Eagles' biggest gets came a day after National Signing Day with the late addition of former South Carolina commit Jacorey Morris. New head coach Jay Hopson and staff are excited about the potential of quarterback Keon Howard, who passed for 3,317 yards and 43 touchdowns as a high school senior.

SMITH: NATI HARNIK / AP

LOUISIANA TECH
BULLDOGS

5-YEAR RECORD
39-25

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Ryan Higgins (6-2, 212, Sr.)
RB	Boston Scott (5-6, 190, Jr.)
LT	Darrell Brown (6-4, 315, Sr.)
LG	O'Shea Dugas (6-5, 330, So.)
C	David Mahaffey (6-4, 307, Sr.)
RG	Deontae McCrady (6-3, 307, So.)
RT	Shane Carpenter (6-6, 300. So.)
TE	Peyton Braswell (6-4, 239, So.)
WR	Trent Taylor (5-8, 180, Sr.)
WR	Carlos Henderson (5-11, 194, Jr.)
WR	Marcus Gaines (5-6, 158, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Deldrick Canty (6-2, 266, Jr.)
DT	Aaron Brown (6-1, 270, Sr.)
DT	Jordan Bradford (6-2, 280, So.)
DE	Immanuel Turner (6-3, 250, So.)
LB	Russell Farris (5-11, 217, Jr.)
LB	Brandon Durman (6-2, 226, So.)
LB	Lloyd Grogan (6-1, 212, Sr.)
CB	Aaron Roberson (5-9, 196, So.)
CB	Trey Spencer (5-11, 171, So.)
FS	Xavier Woods (5-11, 203, Sr.)
SS	Secdrick Cooper (6-0, 205, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jonathan Barnes (5-9, 168, Jr.)
P	Logan McPherson (5-10, 178, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Willie Baker,** DE ★★★
2. **KaDerrion Mason,** DE ★★★
3. **Jack Abraham,** QB ★★★

Louisiana Tech hopes this class of defensive linemen led by three-star ends Willie Baker and KaDerrion Mason can help a group that is losing star Vernon Butler, among others. Coach Skip Holtz may have his quarterback of the future in early enrollee Jack Abraham, who threw for more than 12,000 yards and 130 touchdowns in his career at Oxford (Miss.) High.

WR **Trent Taylor**

TAYLOR: PARKER WATERS / AP

The combination of Jeff Driskel, Kenneth Dixon and defense was supposed to lift Tech to the West championship last year. It didn't happen and now the Bulldogs will play this fall without Driskel, Dixon and eight defensive starters. There will need to be some revamping and tweaking but coach Skip Holtz has earned the benefit of the doubt after guiding the program to consecutive nine-win seasons and back-to-back bowl victories.

It could be back to the future at quarterback. Senior Ryan Higgins, who was a starter in 2013, will have a chance to regain the No. 1 job. Higgins struggled as a redshirt freshman (6 touchdowns to 13 interceptions) in Holtz's first season when Tech went 4-8. Higgins will compete against sophomore Price Wilson, redshirt freshman J'mar Smith and true freshman Jack Abraham, an early enrollee.

Replacing Driskel might not be as difficult as replacing Dixon, who was tied for second in the nation in touchdowns scored (26). The explosive tailback scored 87 times during his career in Ruston. Tech's best hope might be a running back-by-committee approach. Junior Boston Scott is an interesting option. In the New Orleans Bowl, he had a 77-yard run and rushed four times for 106 yards. What should help is an offensive line keyed by seniors Darrell Brown and David Mahaffey and sophomore O'Shea Dugas, who was a 2015 Freshman All-American.

The wide receivers should be fine. Trent Taylor (1,282 receiving yards) and Carlos Henderson (774) are a solid duo. In the bowl game, Taylor had 10 catches for 149 yards and a score. Taylor and Henderson could help the new quarterback fit in quickly.

The biggest concern for Tech has to be the defense. Two years ago, it was one of the best and was still formidable last year, but now it has lost several key players. The Bulldogs must replace all three starting linebackers. Junior Russell Farris (24 tackles, 1.0 sack) showed promise and sophomore Brandon Durman should see more action.

At defensive end, junior-college transfer and former South Carolina signee Kalan Ritchie could be a disruptive force for an inconsistent pass rush. Also, watch out for another end, Jaylon Ferguson, who had six sacks as a freshman. In the secondary, senior safety Xavier Woods tied for the team lead with three interceptions.

Tech has some holes to fill and the early schedule isn't kind. It opens conference play at Middle Tennessee and plays its third league game against Western Kentucky. The second half of the slate is easier but the Bulldogs' conference hopes could come down to the regular-season finale at Southern Miss.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@ARKANSAS	
S.10	South Carolina State	
S.17	@TEXAS TECH	
S.24	@MIDDLE TENN.	45-16
O.1	UTEP	17-15
O.8	Western Kentucky	38-41
O.15	@MASSACHUSETTS*	
O.22	@FLORIDA INTL.	27-17
O.29	Rice	42-17
N.5	@NORTH TEXAS	56-13
N.12	UTSA	34-31
N.26	@SOUTHERN MISS	24-58

At Foxboro, MA

COACH

Skip Holtz
Fourth year (22-17)
CAREER RECORD: 110-88

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Todd Fitch (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Blake Baker (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Arkansas State in the New Orleans Bowl, 47-28)
STADIUM: Joe Aillet Stadium (28,019)
TICKETS: 318-257-3631
SITE: Ruston, La.
WEBSITE: latechsports.com
TWITTER: @LATechFB

3 RICE OWLS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@W. KENTUCKY	10-49
S.10	@ARMY	38-31
S.17	Baylor	17-70
S.24	North Texas	38-24
O.1	@SOUTHERN MISS	10-65
O.15	UTSA	24-34
O.22	Prairie View A&M	
O.29	@LOUISIANA TECH	17-42
N.5	Florida Atlantic	27-26
N.12	@CHARLOTTE	27-7
N.19	UTEP	21-24
N.26	@STANFORD	

COACH

David Bailiff
10th year (53-60)
CAREER RECORD: 74-75

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Larry Edmondson (third year)
Billy Lynch (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Chris Thurmond (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Rice Stadium (47,000)
TICKETS: 713-348-OWLS
SITE: Houston
WEBSITE: riceowls.com
TWITTER: @RiceFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Tyler Stehling (6-6, 210, Sr.)
RB	Darik Dillard (5-10, 215, Sr.)
LT	Calvin Anderson (6-5, 280, So.)
LG	Peter Godber (6-3, 305, Jr.)
C	Trey Martin (6-2, 290, Jr.)
RG	Connor Patterson (6-4, 295, Sr.)
RT	Sam Pierce (6-6, 295, So.)
TE	Connor Cella (6-3, 255, Sr.)
WR	Zach Wright (6-1, 200, Sr.)
WR	Darrion Pollard (5-8, 180, Sr.)
WR	Parker Smith (6-2, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Blain Padgett (6-5, 250, So.)
DT	Roe Wilkins (6-3, 265, Fr.)
DT	Zach Abercrumbia (6-2, 290, So.)
DE	Derek Brown (6-3, 230, Sr.)
LB	Alex Lyons (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB	Emmanuel Ellerbee (6-1, 235, Jr.)
CB	J.T. Blasingame (5-9, 180, Sr.)
CB	Justin Bickham (6-1, 195, So.)
DB	J.P. Thompson (6-0, 185, So.)
FS	Jorian Clark (5-10, 190, So.)
SS	Tabari McGaskey (6-0, 230, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Hayden Tobola (6-1, 180, So.)
P	Jack Fox (6-2, 215, So.)

Sporting News All-American

After three straight seasons of bowl appearances and two postseason victories, Rice is trying to regain its mojo. The Owls were expected to contend in the West but bottomed out due to poor quarterback play, injuries and a bad defense.

Coach David Bailiff, in charge since 2007, has built the Owls into a respectable program and was a candidate for the UTSA job. But the two-time Conference USA Coach of the Year removed his name from consideration. For Rice to get back to a bowl game, job No. 1 will be fixing the defense. The Owls were 108th in the country in points allowed (35.8 per game) and 102nd in yards allowed (447.4). They hit their low point in a 70-17 defeat at Baylor and were pushed around in a 65-10 home loss to Southern Miss.

Rice is optimistic the defense will be better. The unit's strength should be at linebacker with Alex Lyons, who led the team in tackles (77) and had 5.5 tackles for loss. Second-leading tackler Tabari McGaskey (51) is moving from linebacker to strong safety and is expected to give the Owls more versatility and better depth.

Rice's pass rush was nonexistent last season with just 16 sacks—one of the lowest figures in the nation. Having defensive end Graysen Schantz back should make a difference. He played in one game last year due to a season-ending knee injury. Schantz was a 2014 C-USA All-Freshman selection after recording three sacks.

On offense, the Owls are unsettled at quarterback, where they will need to replace graduated quarterback Driphus Jackson, but they have returning talent at running back and wide receiver. In the backfield, Darik Dillard and Austin Walter averaged 5.2 and 5.8 yards per carry, respectively, in 2015. The wide receivers will be keyed by Zach Wright (39 catches, 554 yards, 5 TDs) and 6-5 freshman Aaron Cephus, who could contribute early.

4 UTEP MINERS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	New Mexico State	50-47
S.10	@TEXAS	
S.17	Army	
S.24	Southern Miss	13-34
O.1	@LOUISIANA TECH	15-17
O.8	Florida Intl.	12-52
O.22	@UTSA	6-25
O.29	Old Dominion	21-31
N.5	Houston Baptist	
N.12	@FLA. ATLANTIC	27-17
N.19	@RICE	24-21
N.26	North Texas	20-17

COACH

Sean Kugler
Fourth year (14-23)
CAREER RECORD: 14-23

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Brent Pease (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tom Mason (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Sun Bowl (51,500)
TICKETS: 915-747-6150
SITE: El Paso, Texas
WEBSITE: utepathletics.com
TWITTER: @UTEPAthletics

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Mack Leftwich (5-10, 190, Jr.)
FB	Darrin Laufasa (6-1, 250, Sr.)
RB	Aaron Jones (5-10, 205, Jr.)
LT	Jerome Daniels (6-3, 305, Sr.)
LG	Will Hernandez (6-3, 340, Jr.)
C	Anthony Kyles (6-3, 305, Sr.)
RG	Derek Elmendorff (6-3, 300, Jr.)
RT	John De La Rosa (6-6, 325, Sr.)
TE	Hayden Plinke (6-4, 255, Sr.)
WR	Cole Freytag (6-3, 200, Sr.)
WR	Tyler Batson (6-2, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Nick Usher (6-3, 235, Sr.)
DT	Sky Logan (6-2, 285, Jr.)
DT	Gino Bresolin (6-2, 290, Sr.)
DE	Silas Firstley (6-0, 265, Sr.)
LB	Cooper Foster (6-1, 235, Sr.)
LB	Alvin Jones (5-11, 220, Jr.)
CB	Brandon Moss (6-3, 190, Sr.)
CB	Kalon Beverly (6-1, 175, So.)
DB	Michael Lewis (5-11, 170, So.)
FS	Dashone Smith (6-0, 200, Sr.)
SS	Adrian Hynson (5-10, 185, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jay Mattox (6-0, 185, Sr.)
P	Alan Luna (6-0, 190, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

In coach Sean Kugler's three seasons, the Miners have been up and down. In 2014, UTEP surprised its way to a winning season and a bowl trip. Last season, they finished tied for third with a losing record in a top-heavy division. This year, UTEP has returning talent and a favorable schedule.

Kugler has made staff changes, not retaining offensive coordinator Patrick Higgins or defensive coordinator Scott Stoker. Former Washington wide receivers coach Brent Pease is the new offensive coordinator and former Hawaii assistant Tom Mason will run the defense. Pease is an intriguing hire, having been a longtime assistant for Chris Petersen at Boise State and later at Washington. He also was Florida's offensive coordinator under then-Gators head coach Will Muschamp.

Pease's job will be to get the most out of an unsettled quarterback position. Mack Leftwich, Ryan Metz and Kavika Johnson are in a three-way battle. Leftwich and Metz have starting experience and Johnson saw action in nine games as a true freshman. Leftwich (9 TDs, 3 interceptions in seven games) seems like the best option but suffered two concussions that limited him last season.

The Miners hope tailback Aaron Jones is at full strength. He's working his way back from a season-ending ankle injury. Jones was off to a good start before he was hurt, rushing for 209 yards in two games with a 91-yard score. In 2014, Jones rushed for 1,321 yards and scored 11 touchdowns.

The defense was a mixed bag. It allowed only 162.8 rushing yards per game but yielded 5.0 yards per carry. Those rushing numbers were probably low because teams passed at will on the Miners. Opposing quarterbacks threw for 26 TDs to only five interceptions.

The front seven returns playmaking junior linebacker Alvin Jones (93 tackles, 14.5 for loss) and senior defensive end Nick Usher (10 tackles for loss).

5 UTSA ROADRUNNERS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Alabama State	
S.10	@COLO. STATE	31-33
S.16	Arizona State	
S.24	@OLD DOMINION	31-36
O.8	Southern Miss	10-32
O.15	@RICE	34-24
O.22	UTEP	25-6
O.29	North Texas	23-30
N.5	@MIDDLE TENN.	7-42
N.12	@LOUISIANA TECH	31-34
N.19	@TEXAS A&M	
N.26	Charlotte	30-27

COACH

Frank Wilson
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Frank Scelfo (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Pete Golding (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Alamodome (65,000)
TICKETS: 210-458-UTSA
SITE: San Antonio
WEBSITE: goutsa.com
TWITTER: @UTSAFTBL

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Dalton Sturm (6-1, 180, Jr.)
RB	Jarveon Williams (5-9, 200, Sr.)
LT	Reed Darragh (6-4, 285, Jr.)
LG	Austin Pratt (6-2, 300, Jr.)
C	Clayton Woods (6-2, 295, So.)
RG	Gabriel Casillas (6-5, 280, Sr.)
RT	Cody Cole (6-5, 280, Sr.)
TE	Trevor Stevens (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR	Dannon Cavil (6-1, 210, Jr.)
WR	Kerry Thomas Jr. (6-0, 200, Jr.)
WR	Marquez McNair (6-1, 185, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Marcus Davenport (6-6, 225, Jr.)
DT	Jonathan Tuiolosega (6-1, 285, Sr.)
DT	Kevin Strong Jr. (6-3, 285, So.)
DE	Romario Napoles (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LB	Kevin Garcia (6-2, 225, Sr.)
LB	Marcos Curry (5-11, 220, Jr.)
CB	Aneas Henricks (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	Stanley Dye Jr. (5-9, 170, So.)
S	Michael Egwuagu (6-0, 225, Sr.)
S	Carl Austin III (6-0, 185, So.)
S	Nate Gaines (6-2, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Daniel Portillo (6-0, 170, Jr.)
P	Yannis Routsas (6-3, 200, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Former LSU running backs coach Frank Wilson will try to improve upon the program that predecessor Larry Coker started as UTSA's new head coach. The Roadrunners were built from scratch with their first season in 2011. They were 8-4 and 7-5 in his second and third years, respectively, but went 7-17 in his final two and the 67-year-old former University of Miami coach stepped down.

Wilson, 42, has never even been a coordinator but he comes with a reputation of being stellar at talent acquisition (most notably LSU star tailback Leonard Fournette). He was named the nation's top recruiter in 2014 by NFL.com and the 2011 Recruiter of the Year by Rivals.com. Of course, attracting players at LSU isn't a hard sell. Recruiting for UTSA is. Rivals ranked the Roadrunners' incoming class ninth out of 14 C-USA teams. Wilson took the job in mid-January and won't be judged until the next few classes.

The Roadrunners should have a solid offense with seven returning starters. Last season, senior tailback Jarveon Williams was fourth in the league in rushing yards per game (94.7), averaged 6.0 yards per carry and scored eight touchdowns.

The team also returns its top wide receiver, Kerry Thomas Jr. (52 catches, 541 yards, 4 TDs). The addition of Oklahoma transfer Dannon Cavil and junior-college wideout Marquez McNair could help the offense pack a punch. Junior quarterback Dalton Sturm, a former walk-on, was inconsistent but showed promise by playing well against Louisiana Tech. But it doesn't matter who is under center if he's not given adequate protection. The Roadrunners allowed an FBS-worst 44 sacks.

The defense was lousy and UTSA was 10th in C-USA in pass-efficiency defense. The line will be keyed by Marcus Davenport (4.0 sacks, 7.5 tackles for loss) and Kevin Strong Jr. (2.5, 6.5). Ronnie Feist, a graduate transfer from LSU, should help at linebacker.

6 NORTH TEXAS MEAN GREEN

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	SMU	13-31
S.10	Bethune-Cookman	
S.17	@FLORIDA	
S.24	@RICE	24-38
O.1	Middle Tennessee	7-41
O.8	Marshall	13-30
O.22	@ARMY	
O.29	@UTSA	30-23
N.5	Louisiana Tech	13-56
N.12	@W. KENTUCKY	28-55
N.19	Southern Miss	14-49
N.26	@UTEP	17-20

COACH

Seth Littrell
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Graham Harrell (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Mike Ekeler (first year)
Troy Reffett (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 1-11
STADIUM: Apogee Stadium (30,850)
TICKETS: 800-868-2366
SITE: Denton, Texas
WEBSITE: meangreensports.com
TWITTER: @MeanGreenFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Caleb Chumley (6-5, 240, Fr.)
RB	Jeffrey Wilson (6-0, 195, Jr.)
LT	Jordan Murray (6-9, 360, So.)
LG	Sam Rice (6-4, 297, Sr.)
C	Kaydon Kirby (6-3, 320, Sr.)
RG	Avery Fortenberry (6-5, 297, So.)
RT	Chris Miles (6-4, 299, So.)
TE	Wylie Reinhardt (6-4, 261, Sr.)
WR	Turner Smiley (6-0, 189, Jr.)
WR	Thaddeous Thompson (6-2, 202, Sr.)
WR	O'Keeron Rutherford (6-5, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jarrian Roberts (6-2, 252, Sr.)
DT	T.J. Tauaalo (6-2, 287, So.)
DT	Roderick Young (6-1, 287, So.)
DE	Malik Dilonga (6-4, 264, Sr.)
LB	Brandon Garner (5-11, 225, So.)
LB	Fred Scott (5-11, 233, Sr.)
LB	Calvin Minor (6-3, 213, Jr.)
CB	Kenny Buyers (5-11, 185, Sr.)
CB	Chad Davis (5-10, 181, Sr.)
FS	Kishawn McClain (5-11, 201, Jr.)
SS	James Gray (6-0, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Trevor Moore (5-11, 194, Jr.)
P	Eric Keena (6-2, 175, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Former North Carolina offensive coordinator Seth Littrell is taking on a tough job. The last coach to have a career winning record at North Texas was Hayden Fry, who went 40-23-3 from 1973-78. Since then, nine coaches have tried and only two have won a bowl game. Dan McCarney was one of those two, directing the 2013 Mean Green team to a 9-4 record and a win over UNLV in the Heart of Dallas Bowl.

During McCarney's four full years, that was the program's lone winning season. After starting 0-5 last season, capped by an embarrassing 66-7 loss to FCS Portland State, McCarney was fired. The team was outscored by 26 points per game on average in 2015.

Littrell, who turns 38 in June, is one of the youngest coaches in the FBS. He ran an offense at North Carolina that was ninth in FBS scoring (40.7 points per game) and 18th in total yards (486.9 per game). Littrell also directed potent offenses at Indiana and Arizona. Interestingly, he has hired former Texas Tech quarterback Graham Harrell as his offensive coordinator.

Putting together a good offense at North Texas will be a challenge. The Mean Green were tied for fourth worst in the FBS in scoring (15.2 points per game) and 117th in total yards (320.1 per game) last year.

Littrell has an interesting collection of quarterbacks on the roster. Alabama transfer Alec Morris was a career backup with the Crimson Tide. He'll compete against junior Quinn Shanbour, freshman Caleb Chumley and sophomore Connor Means.

Junior tailback Jeffrey Wilson (830 yards rushing, 5.4 per carry) is the lone established weapon on offense.

The defense was also porous. The Mean Green were near the bottom of the FBS in points allowed (41.2 per game) and total yards allowed (502.6). The most reliable defender is senior lineman Jarrian Roberts (6.5 sacks, 10.0 tackles for loss).

Logan Woodside and Toledo will look to end the stranglehold that Bowling Green and Northern Illinois have had on the MAC in recent years.

Falcons should still soar without Babers, but intriguing mix in Toledo will fuel Rockets' title hopes

BY RODNEY MCKISSIC
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

Parity certainly isn't a word associated with the Mid-American Conference of late.

Since 2011, either Northern Illinois or Bowling Green has been crowned champion while the last team outside "The Power Two" to claim the title was Miami (Ohio) in 2010. Continuing a successful run that started under Dave Clawson and most recently with Dino Babers, Bowling Green rose to the top behind a high-powered offense and devastated opponents to the tune of 42.2 points per game, which ranked sixth nationally. They won the MAC East by two games and, even in losses to Tennessee, Memphis, Toledo and Georgia Southern, the Falcons averaged 31.5 points.

As encore performances go, the 2015 season might be a tough act to follow for BGSU. Like Clawson, who left for Wake Forest, Babers took his offensive wizardry to Syracuse and put the program in the hands of former Texas Tech assistant Mike Jinks. But the foundation has been laid and Jinks is expected to continue the avalanche of success.

If there's one team that can potentially break up the monotony, it's Toledo and first-year coach Jason Candle. The Rockets welcome back junior quarterback Logan Woodside, who redshirted last season after starting in 2014, as well as tailbacks Kareem Hunt and Terry Swanson.

Meanwhile, Northern Illinois, which has claimed at least a share of the MAC West title for six consecutive seasons, will not be easily pushed aside. High expectations have become the norm for the Huskies and some considered last season's 8-6 mark to be a mild disappointment. After all, NIU finished with 10 or more victories each year from 2010-14.

The most intriguing team in the conference is Akron under fifth-year coach Terry Bowden. The Zips finally made a breakthrough and finished over .500 for the first time in 10 seasons and earned the program's first bowl victory. The first task is to improve QB Thomas Woodson's passing efficiency and, if Bowden can do that, Akron could be a MAC dark horse with a potentially stellar defense.

"The level of expectations has changed dramatically," Bowden told the *Akron Beacon Journal*. "Eight wins? Been there, done that. This team wants to play for a conference championship."

WOODSIDE: DAVID RICHARD / AP; RUSH: AL GOLDIS / AP

PROJECTED FINISH

EAST DIVISION

1. **Bowling Green**
   BOWL PROJECTION: GoDaddy Bowl
2. **Ohio**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Miami Beach Bowl
3. **Akron**
4. **Kent State**
5. **Miami (Ohio)**
6. **Buffalo**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Toledo**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
2. **Western Michigan**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Camellia Bowl
3. **Northern Illinois**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Boca Raton Bowl
4. **Central Michigan**
5. **Ball State**
6. **Eastern Michigan**

Cooper Rush, QB, Central Michigan

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Fleck on the rise:** Dino Babers and Matt Campbell took their talents to bigger schools and the next in line is P.J. Fleck, whose recruiting and quick turnaround at Western Michigan make him a hot commodity.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Steve Wiltfong, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Western Michigan	27	0	0	19	158.79
2	Miami (Ohio)	21	0	0	9	128.12
3	Toledo	22	0	0	10	126.59
4	Ball State	23	0	0	7	112.58
5	Ohio	25	0	0	4	107.77
6	Bowling Green	15	0	0	5	106.05
7	Central Michigan	13	0	0	7	104.92
8	Eastern Michigan	21	0	0	6	104.70
9	Northern Illinois	19	0	0	4	99.21
10	Buffalo	18	0	0	3	97.31
11	Akron	12	0	0	3	85.08
12	Kent State	16	0	0	1	82.32

ALL-MID-AMERICAN

OFFENSE

- **QB** Cooper Rush, Sr., Central Michigan
- **RB** Joel Bouagnon, Sr., Northern Illinois
- **RB** Kareem Hunt, Sr., Toledo
- **OL** Storm Norton, Sr., Toledo
- **OL** Levon Myers, Sr., Northern Illinois
- **OL** Jacob Bennett, Sr., Bowling Green
- **OL** Taylor Moton, Sr., Western Michigan
- **OL** Logan Dietz, Sr., Bowling Green
- **TE** Cody Tuttle, Sr., Eastern Michigan
- **WR** Corey Davis, Sr., Western Michigan
- **WR** Kenny Golladay, Sr., Northern Illinois

DEFENSE

- **DL** Joshua Posley, Sr., Ball State
- **DL** Jamal Marcus, Sr., Akron
- **DL** JT Jones, Sr., Miami (Ohio)
- **DL** Terence Waugh, Sr., Kent State
- **LB** Sean Wiggins, Sr., Ball State
- **LB** Austin Valdez, Jr., Bowling Green
- **LB** Trent Greene, Sr., Bowling Green
- **DB** Shawun Lurry, Jr., Northern Illinois
- **DB** Demetrius Monday, Jr., Kent State
- **DB** Nate Holley, Sr., Kent State
- **DB** Asantay Brown, Jr., Western Michigan

SPECIALISTS

- **K** Christian Hagan, Jr., Northern Illinois
- **P** Joe Davidson, Jr., Bowling Green

DAVIS: DAVID RICHARD / AP

↗ NEWSMAKER

Western Michigan WR **Corey Davis** could have entered the NFL Draft like teammate Daniel Braverman—there's always a market for elite playmakers—but he returned to Western Michigan to become more well-rounded as a receiving threat. A two-time first-team All-MAC selection, Davis is just 403 yards away from setting the conference record for receiving yards in a career.

↘ OVERRATED

OHIO

While Ohio has talent at the skill positions, the offense sputtered badly during the spring and will enter training camp filled with questions.

↘ UNDERRATED

CENTRAL MICHIGAN

It was incredible how quickly John Bonamego worked his magic at Central Michigan under so much adversity. Imagine what he can accomplish with a full year under his belt.

2 **Rush to judgement:** The teams with the best play behind center generally win the MAC, so keep an eye on Central Michigan and quarterback Cooper Rush.

3 **Super sophs:** Speaking of quarterbacks, young talent will emerge in sophomores Riley Neal of Ball State and Billy Bahl from Miami (Ohio).

RATING THE MID-AMERICAN

↘ FASTEST RECEIVER
Corey Davis, Western Michigan
One of the top playmakers in the country.

↘ BEST HANDS
Kenny Golladay, WR, Northern Illinois
Caught 73 passes for 1,129 yards as a junior.

↘ BEST PASSING QB
Zach Terrell, Western Michigan
Ranked second in the MAC in passing efficiency and touchdowns and third in passing yards.

↘ BEST RUNNING QB
Thomas Woodson, Akron
The Zips leading returning rusher with 600 yards.

↘ MOST ELUSIVE RB
Jamauri Bogan, Western Michigan
Averaged 6.5 yards per carry as a freshman.

↘ BEST INSTINCTS
Terry Swanson, RB, Toledo
No one in the league is better at reaching the second level of the defense in a hurry.

↘ BEST ATHLETE
Cody Thompson, WR, Toledo
Averaged a league-best 22.3 yards per catch.

↘ BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Cooper Rush, QB, Central Michigan
Even under a heated pass rush, he always plays with poise.

↘ TOP NFL PROSPECT
Kareem Hunt, RB, Toledo
Doak Walker Award candidate.

↘ TOP FRESHMAN
Matt Falcon, RB, Western Michigan
One-time Michigan commit joins a deep backfield.

↘ TOP TRANSFER
Kevin Houchins Jr., CB, Ohio
Played three seasons at Louisville and moved up the depth chart quickly.

↘ HARDEST HITTER
DeJuan Rogers, FS, Toledo
Hits like someone who plays closer to the line of scrimmage.

↘ BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Jerome Lane Jr., WR, Akron
Finally found a home as a big-play receiver.

↘ BEST INTERVIEW
P.J. Fleck, head coach, Western Michigan
Always enthusiastic and upbeat.

↘ BEST COACH
Frank Solich, Ohio
Bobcats have been bowl-eligible in nine of the last 10 seasons.

↘ COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Kirk Ciarrocca, Western Michigan
Developing quarterbacks is his specialty.

↘ HOTTEST SEAT
Paul Haynes, Kent State
He hasn't made anyone forget about Darrell Hazell.

↘ LOUDEST STADIUM
Peden Stadium, Ohio
Conference leader in attendance.

↘ TOP SCHOLAR
Matt Bahr, S, Kent State
The league's Distinguished Scholar Athlete and a criminal justice major.

BOWLING GREEN
FALCONS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

LB Austin Valdez

The hiring of Mike Jinks by Bowling Green is viewed as a seamless transition all over the MAC while raising the expectations among Falcons fans.

So what changes will the first-year coach make? Given how much the team was injury depleted during the spring, no one will know until the fall.

Considering Jinks was the running backs coach during his previous stop at Texas Tech, Bowling Green could become more ground oriented. Nevertheless, Kevin Kilmer and fellow co-offensive coordinator Andy Padron have pass-happy backgrounds. The offense has a strong base although holes are left by the departure of receivers Roger Lewis and Gehrig Dieter.

Senior James Knapke heads into training camp as the starting quarterback, while redshirt freshman James Morgan is the backup. Knapke has huge shoes to fill with the loss of All-MAC quarterback Matt Johnson, but Knapke does have some experience, having appeared in all 14 games last year while completing 14 of 20 passes.

"I've been in quarterback competitions it seems like since I've been here, so I'm used to it and I enjoy it," Knapke told reporters in the spring. "You have to come every day and compete and work hard. It kind of helps me being the old guy now that I can kind of bring along (Morgan) and show him things that I've learned over the years."

The playmaker at wide receiver is Ronnie Moore, who started just three games last year but was still third on the team in receptions with 72 for 954 yards and six touchdowns.

A strong defense that creates turnovers has been a constant of Bowling Green football over the last few seasons, which fits the philosophy of coordinator Perry Eliano, whom Jinks hired from Texas-San Antonio. Eliano will shift from the Tampa-2 scheme employed by the Falcons last season in favor of a more traditional, but attacking, 4-3.

That should play into the hands of returning All-MAC performers Austin Valdez and Trent Greene, the best linebacking tandem in the conference. Eliano, who also doubles as the safeties coach, can utilize some nickel packages in the secondary because of good, experienced depth in corners Alfonso Mack and Clint Stephens along with safeties Jack Walz III and Ben Hale.

Although there were some surprising departures after coach Dino Babers left for Syracuse, talent is not a problem at Bowling Green and they added yet another coach who knows how to win. A third MAC title in four seasons is the program's objective.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@OHIO STATE	
S.10	North Dakota	
S.17	Middle Tennessee	
S.24	@MEMPHIS	41-44
O.1	Eastern Michigan	
O.8	@OHIO	62-24
O.15	@TOLEDO	28-44
O.22	Miami (Ohio)	
N.1	@N. ILLINOIS	34-14
N.9	@AKRON	59-10
N.15	Kent State	48-0
N.25	Buffalo	28-22

COACH

Mike Jinks
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Andy Padron (first year)
Kevin Kilmer (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Perry Eliano (first year)
Marcus White (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-4
(Lost to Georgia Southern in the GoDaddy Bowl, 58-27)
STADIUM: Doyt L. Perry Stadium (23,724)
TICKETS: 877-247-8842
SITE: Bowling Green, Ohio
WEBSITE: bgsufalcons.com
TWITTER: @BG_Football

5-YEAR RECORD
41-26

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	James Knapke (6-2, 237, Sr.)
RB	Fred Coppet (5-9, 205, Sr.)
LT	Jacob Bennett (6-5, 319, Sr.)
LG	Ryan Hunter (6-4, 308, Jr.)
C	Tim McAuliffe (6-0, 272, Jr.)
RG	J.J. Beggan (6-3, 298, Sr.)
RT	Logan Dietz (6-6, 298, Sr.)
TE	Hunter Folkertsma (6-5, 244, Jr.)
WR	Robbie Rhodes (6-0, 190, Jr.)
WR	Ronnie Moore (5-9, 170, Sr.)
WR	Teo Redding (6-1, 167, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	David Konowalski (6-3, 219, So.)
DT	Shannon Smith (6-0, 281, Jr.)
NT	Izaah Lunsford (6-3, 294, Jr.)
DE	Terrance Bush (6-2, 252, Sr.)
OLB	Trent Greene (5-9, 213, Sr.)
MLB	Austin Valdez (6-0, 225, Jr.)
OLB	James Sanford (6-1, 196, Sr.)
CB	Alfonso Mack (5-11, 178, Sr.)
CB	Clint Stephens (5-10, 182, Jr.)
FS	Jack Walz III (5-10, 190, So.)
SS	Ben Hale (6-2, 197, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Nick Fields (5-11, 215, Jr.)
P	Joe Davidson (6-7, 222, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Armani Posey,** ATH ★★★
2. **Darrion Landry,** WR ★★★
3. **Elijah Cunningham,** QB ★★★

A small class for the Falcons that finished No. 7 in the Mid-American Conference per the 247Sports Rankings is highlighted by one of the Midwest's best athletes in Armani Posey. He could play linebacker on the next level, but led his Detroit King team to a state championship as a quarterback last fall. Junior-college wideout Darrion Landry is a big addition with Bowling Green losing its top two receivers from last season, while quarterback Elijah Cunningham has a bright future in this conference.

VALDEZ: FRANK JANSKY / ICON SPORTSWIRE

2 OHIO BOBCATS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Texas State	
S.10	@KANSAS	
S.17	@TENNESSEE	
S.24	Gardner-Webb	
O.1	@MIAMI (OHIO)	34-3
O.8	Bowling Green	24-62
O.15	Eastern Michigan	
O.22	@KENT STATE	27-0
O.27	@TOLEDO	
N.3	Buffalo	17-41
N.15	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	
N.22	Akron	14-12

COACH

Frank Solich
12th year (80-61)
CAREER RECORD: 138-80

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Tim Albin (12th year)
Scott Isphording (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jimmy Burrow (12th year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Appalachian State in the Camellia Bowl, 31-29)
STADIUM: Peden Stadium (24,000)
TICKETS: 800-575-2287
SITE: Athens, Ohio
WEBSITE: ohiobobcats.com
TWITTER: @OhioFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**J.D. Sprague** (6-1, 196, Sr.)
RB	**A.J. Ouellette** (5-10, 202, Jr.)
LT	**Austen Pleasants** (6-7, 321, Fr.)
LG	**Nick Gibbons** (6-5, 309, Sr.)
C	**Jake Pruehs** (6-2, 300, Jr.)
RG	**Durrell Wood** (6-2, 313, Jr.)
RT	**Troy Watson** (6-6, 293, Sr.)
TE	**Mason Morgan** (6-6, 252, Jr.)
WR	**Sebastian Smith** (6-3, 206, Sr.)
WR	**Jordan Reid** (6-3, 209, Sr.)
WR	**Brendan Cope** (6-2, 195, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Tarell Basham** (6-4, 262, Sr.)
DT	**Casey Sayles** (6-3, 288, Sr.)
NT	**Cleon Aloese** (6-0, 301, Jr.)
DE	**Kurt Laseak** (6-4, 244, Sr.)
OLB	**Blair Brown** (6-0, 240, Sr.)
MLB	**Quentin Poling** (6-0, 239, Jr.)
OLB	**Chad Moore** (6-0, 209, Jr.)
CB	**Langston Provitt** (5-11, 181, So.)
CB	**Kevin Houchins Jr.** (5-11, 195, Sr.)
FS	**Toran Davis** (6-0, 212, Sr.)
SS	**Kylan Nelson** (5-10, 202, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Louie Zervos** (5-9, 168, Fr.)
P	**Michael Farkas** (6-3, 188, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

There should be an easy transition from Derrius Vick to J.D. Sprague as the primary starter at quarterback in Ohio's pistol attack. Vick and Sprague essentially shared the position for two seasons, but Sprague appeared in seven games while accounting for 1,146 yards and passing for seven touchdowns and three interceptions. While coach Frank Solich called the competition wide-open–Sprague missed the entire spring after surgery on his right shoulder–he is the most experienced quarterback on the roster.

A.J. Ouellette could have a huge year at tailback. After rushing for 687 yards and six touchdowns last season, the junior had an impressive showing during the spring. But the Bobcats are deep in the backfield–their stable of running backs is one of the best in the MAC–and Solich will have to figure a way to get a combination of Iowa transfer C.J. Hilliard, Papi White, Dorian Brown and Maleek Irons on the field.

Another player in line for a breakout season is senior wideout Sebastian Smith, the team's No. 1 target who finished with 65 receptions for 777 yards and seven touchdowns last year. Solich is also expecting to receive a lift from senior Jordan Reid.

On defense, the Bobcats have a star at middle linebacker in Quentin Poling, who had 10.5 tackles for loss and four sacks in 2015. Poling and end Kurt Laseak, who finished with 4.5 sacks and 6.0 tackles for loss, help create a lively pass rush that will be much improved. The Bobcats seek depth at linebacker, something that was sorely lacking last season when Ouellette was being prepared to go both ways because of injuries.

Cornerback Ian Wells is gone but Louisville graduate transfer Kevin Houchins Jr. had an outstanding spring, impressing coaches with his effort, athleticism and awareness.

3 AKRON ZIPS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	VMI	
S.10	@WISCONSIN	
S.17	@MARSHALL	
S.24	Appalachian State	
O.1	@KENT STATE	20-0
O.8	Miami (Ohio)	37-28
O.15	Western Michigan	
O.22	@BALL STATE	
O.27	@BUFFALO	42-21
N.2	Toledo	
N.9	Bowling Green	10-59
N.22	@OHIO	12-14

COACH

Terry Bowden
Fifth year (19-30)
CAREER RECORD: 159-92-2

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
A.J. Milwee (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Chuck Amato (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Utah State in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, 23-21)
STADIUM: InfoCision Stadium (30,000)
TICKETS: 888-99-AKRON
SITE: Akron, Ohio
WEBSITE: gozips.com
TWITTER: @ZipsFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Thomas Woodson** (6-1, 240, Jr.)
RB	**Van Edwards Jr.** (5-9, 185, So.)
LT	**Kyle Ritz** (6-5, 305, So.)
LG	**LaVonne Gauthney** (6-1, 290, Jr.)
C	**Stephen Ericksen** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
RG	**Ryan Kortokrax** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
RT	**Undrea Bullard** (6-6, 295, So.)
TE	**Newman Williams** (6-2, 250, So.)
WR	**Tyrell Goodman** (6-2, 215, Sr.)
WR	**JoJo Natson** (5-8, 165, Sr.)
WR	**Jerome Lane Jr.** (6-3, 220, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Jamal Marcus** (6-2, 240, Sr.)
DT	**Brock Boxen** (6-3, 272, So.)
NT	**Darius Copeland** (6-1, 280, Jr.)
DE	**Daumantas Venckus** (6-5, 230, Sr.)
OLB	**Brian Bell** (6-3, 218, So.)
MLB	**John Rachal** (5-11, 225, Sr.)
OLB	**Ulysees Gilbert III** (6-1, 225, So.)
CB	**Larry Hope** (6-0, 183, Sr.)
CB	**DeAndre Scott** (5-11, 185, Sr.)
FS	**Zach Guiser** (6-1, 195, Jr.)
SS	**Jordan George** (5-11, 193, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Tom O'Leary** (5-11, 190, So.)
P	**Nick Gasser** (6-0, 167, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Akron has improved steadily each season under Terry Bowden, culminating with the program's first bowl victory in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl last season. The next step is contention for the MAC championship and perhaps double-digit victories. The play of quarterback Thomas Woodson, who completed just 52.8 percent of his passes in 2015, improved as last season wore on, but Woodson will face a challenge from fellow junior Tra'Von Chapman.

Terry Bowden

The entire offensive line has to be rebuilt, but because of injuries, left tackle Kyle Ritz, left guard LaVonne Gauthney and center Stephen Ericksen all saw extended minutes last season. The passing game features a potential playmaker in wide receiver Jerome Lane Jr., the son of backboard-shattering former Pittsburgh basketball All-American Jerome Lane. Lane experienced few growing pains after converting from defensive back a year ago. The key is finding a deep threat to complement Lane and it helps that Mykel Traylor-Bennett returns after missing last season with a broken hand.

The return of senior end Jamal Marcus bolsters a good defense. Marcus earned All-MAC honors while finishing second on the Zips in tackles for loss with 12.5.

All of the starting linebackers are gone and it will be hard to account for the losses of Jatavis Brown and Dylan Evans. Brian Bell and Ulysees Gilbert III on the outside and John Rachal on the inside are the likely replacements.

The secondary is led by senior cornerback DeAndre Scott, who registered a team-best six interceptions. Despite the losses at linebacker, this is an athletic defense and, with a favorable schedule, the pieces are in place to ride into the conversation for the MAC championship.

BOWDEN: MICHAEL DWYER / AP

4 KENT STATE
GOLDEN FLASHES

If we're talking strictly defense, Kent State might be peerless in the MAC. It starts with the pass rush and senior end Terence Waugh, who was third in the conference in sacks last season with nine. Overall, the Golden Flashes were second in the league in sacks (32) behind rival Akron. Opponents completed just 53.8 percent of their passes against the secondary, which features cornerback Demetrius Monday (6 interceptions) and safety Nate Holley, a pair of All-MAC players.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	@PENN STATE
S.10	North Carolina A&T
S.17	Monmouth
S.24	@ALABAMA
O.1	Akron
O.8	@BUFFALO
O.15	@MIAMI (OHIO)
O.22	Ohio
O.29	@CENT. MICHIGAN
N.8	Western Michigan
N.15	@BOWLING GREEN
N.25	Northern Illinois

But when the talk shifts to offense, Kent State is sorely lacking. It finished last in the conference in total offense by a sizable margin while averaging a paltry 4.1 yards per play. A lot of the problems were due to ineffective play behind center as Colin Reardon and George Bollas essentially shared the position to the tune of nine touchdowns and 10 interceptions.

Paul Haynes

The lack of a passing attack enabled defenses to key in on a running game that sputtered. The return of Nick Holley, who missed most of the season with hip and back issues, should help. The offensive line has experience and depth with left tackle Reno Reda and left guard Wayne Scott starting a combined 55 career games.

The nonconference schedule features Penn State and Alabama but also includes North Carolina A&T and Monmouth, which will serve as confidence-building games for an offense that desperately needs a boost. If the offense develops, a bowl berth awaits.

QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 3-9

COACH: Paul Haynes (fourth year, 9-26)
CAREER RECORD: 9-26
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Don Treadwell (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ben Needham (first year)
STADIUM: Dix Stadium (25,319)
TICKETS: 330-672-2244
SITE: Kent, Ohio
WEBSITE: kentstatesports.com
TWITTER: @KentStFootball

5 MIAMI (OH)
REDHAWKS

If Miami reaches north of .500 for the first time since 2010, it will be in large part due to its defense. The front seven is aggressive, led by senior lineman JT Jones, who can be utilized inside and out. Jones was second in the MAC in sacks last season with 10.0 and the RedHawks were third in the conference in sacks with 30.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	@IOWA
S.10	Eastern Illinois
S.17	Western Kentucky
S.24	@CINCINNATI
O.1	Ohio
O.8	@AKRON
O.15	Kent State
O.22	@BOWLING GREEN
O.29	@EAST. MICHIGAN
N.4	Central Michigan
N.12	@BUFFALO
N.22	Ball State

The linebacking corps is undoubtedly a strength, led by junior Paul Moses, a converted tailback who was third on the team in stops with 71. Also back at outside linebacker is TJ Williams, while Junior McMullen is expected to start at middle linebacker in place of the departed Kent Kern, an outstanding run stuffer who will be sorely missed.

Chuck Martin

The secondary is young but the return of cornerback Heath Harding, the group's anchor in 2014 who missed most of last season with an injury, gives the unit some experience. Kendrell McFadden, a former four-star recruit who redshirted as a freshman in 2015, adds to a deep and talented pool of safeties.

But coach Chuck Martin would like to stay out of the business of playing true freshmen because they generally aren't ready to play. Among those who experienced the bumps of playing immediately are quarterbacks Billy Bahl and Gus Ragland. Bahl played in 11 games and started seven, leading Miami with 1,409 yards passing with 13 interceptions and eight touchdowns. Ragland finished second on the team in rushing with 331 yards and two touchdowns.

QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 3-9

COACH: Chuck Martin (third year, 5-19)
CAREER RECORD: 79-26
OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS: George Barnett (third year), Eric Koehler (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Matt Pawlowski (third year), John Hauser (third yr.)
STADIUM: Yager Stadium (24,286)
TICKETS: 513-529-HAWK
SITE: Oxford, Ohio
WEBSITE: miamiredhawks.com
TWITTER: @MiamiOHFootball

6 BUFFALO
BULLS

Buffalo is dealing with the tragic loss of linebacker Solomon Jackson, who was hospitalized after a medical emergency suffered during offseason conditioning and was pronounced dead a week later.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.2	Albany
S.17	@NEVADA
S.24	Army
O.1	@BOSTON COLLEGE
O.8	Kent State
O.15	Ball State
O.22	@NORTH. ILLINOIS
O.27	Akron
N.5	@OHIO
N.12	Miami (Ohio)
N.19	@WEST. MICHIGAN
N.25	@BOWLING GREEN

As the Bulls transition from misfortune to football, there are plenty of question marks surrounding the program. Joe Licata, a four-year starter at quarterback who was woefully inconsistent as a senior, is gone and redshirt freshman Tyree Jackson will get first crack at the job. As Jackson gains experience, it would be wise for the Bulls to lean on their run game, which is led by senior Jordan Johnson (12 rushing touchdowns in 2015) and sophomore Johnathan Hawkins.

Lance Leipold

The defense needs more production after finishing 11th in both yards allowed and points allowed in conference games. Everyone returns from a front four led by end Brandon Crawford, but a pass rush needs to be developed.

All-MAC linebacker Brandon Berry is back as is Jarrett Franklin, who sat out last year with a back injury. Cornerback Boise Ross tied for sixth in the country in passes defended with 20. Cameron Lewis will replace Marqus Baker at the other corner.

It should help that the Bulls are in their second year under coach Lance Leipold and they have experience at key skill positions on offense, save quarterback. There are also holes to fill on defense.

This doesn't look like the season in which the Bulls will gain bowl eligibility.

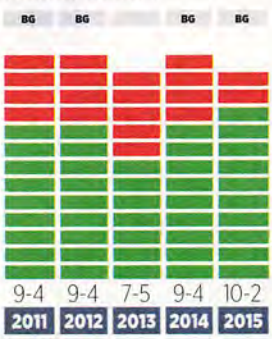
QUICK HITS
2015 RECORD: 5-7

COACH: Lance Leipold (second year, 5-7)
CAREER RECORD: 114-13
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Andy Kotelnicki (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian Borland (second year)
STADIUM: UB Stadium (29,013)
TICKETS: 877-UB-THERE
SITE: Buffalo
WEBSITE: ubbulls.com
TWITTER: @UBFootball

HAYNES: STEPHEN HAAS / AP; MARTIN: JOHN MINCHILLO / AP; LEIPOLD: GENE J. PUSKAR / AP

TOLEDO
ROCKETS

5-YEAR RECORD
44-19



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB Terry Swanson

1
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Toledo merely went through a coaching change in the offseason. Other than that, don't expect much drama from the successful Matt Campbell Era to longtime assistant Jason Candle, the Rockets' offensive coordinator a year ago who should prove to be a wise investment as the new head coach.

"We have a solid foundation, so there's no reason to make major changes to the way we do things around here," says Candle. "We are going to be diligent to continue the success we've had here. At the same time, I know what the expectation is here."

While Campbell led the Rockets to a 10-2 record in 2015, they failed to advance to the MAC title game and haven't captured the overall conference championship since 2004. Whether Candle can finally end the streak remains to be seen, but the Rockets do return 12 starters from a highly successful squad.

They continue to be loaded with talent and depth at tailback with the return of senior Kareem Hunt and junior Terry Swanson, a pair of all-league performers. Despite battling injuries early in the season, Hunt led the conference in rushing yards per game (108.1) and gained 624 yards with nine touchdowns over the last five games. Swanson stockpiled 923 yards rushing and was second in the league in yards per carry (6.5).

Quarterback Logan Woodside missed last year while recovering from ankle surgery. He threw for 2,263 yards and 19 touchdowns as a sophomore in 2014 and is the most experienced quarterback on the roster. The Rockets have two proven go-to receivers in senior Corey Jones and junior Cody Thompson.

Toledo returns four starters on the offensive line, including All-MAC left tackle Storm Norton. The unit didn't yield a sack until the Northern Illinois game–the eighth contest of the season–and allowed just five overall. Joining Norton on the MAC's top offensive line are left guard Paul Perschon, right guard Mike Ebert and right tackle Elijah Nkansah. The Rockets must replace center Ruben Carter, and junior Nate Jeppesen and redshirt freshman Bryce Harris will battle deep into training camp.

The defense, nevertheless, has concerns. Only four starters return and a pair of potential starters–linebacker Jaylen Coleman and corner Jordan Martin–didn't participate in the spring because of injuries. The Rockets lost cornerbacks Cheatham Norrils and Christian Dukes, free safety Rolan Milligan and strong safety Chaz Whittaker. Connery Swift and Delando Johnson will battle for the spot at strong safety vacated by Whittaker, while Trevon Mathis gets the nod for Norrils' job at corner.

With strength and experience in the backfield and offensive line and with so much talent at the skill positions, the Rockets are the best bet to win the MAC West even as the defense plays catch-up.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Logan Woodside (6-2, 210, Jr.)
FB	Adam Kulon (6-4, 250, Jr.)
RB	Kareem Hunt (6-0, 225, Sr.)
LT	Storm Norton (6-8, 310, Sr.)
LG	Paul Perschon (6-6, 310, Sr.)
C	Nate Jeppesen (6-3, 292, Jr.)
RG	Mike Ebert (6-6, 298, Sr.)
RT	Elijah Nkansah (6-6, 295, Jr.)
TE	Michael Roberts (6-4, 265, Sr.)
WR	Cody Thompson (6-1, 202, Jr.)
WR	Corey Jones (5-9, 165, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	John Stepec (6-3, 260, Sr.)
DT	Marquise Moore (6-0, 300, Sr.)
DT	Treyvon Hester (6-4, 305, Sr.)
DE	Olasunkanmi Adeniyi (6-2, 250, So.)
LB	Jaylen Coleman (6-0, 235, Sr.)
LB	Ja'Wuan Woodley (5-11, 230, Jr.)
CB	Trevon Mathis (6-0, 175, Jr.)
CB	Jordan Martin (6-2, 205, Jr.)
FS	DeJuan Rogers (6-1, 191, Sr.)
SS	Connery Swift (5-11, 195, Sr.)
S	Josh Teachey (5-11, 172, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jameson Vest (5-9, 203, So.)
P	Nick Ellis (5-11, 170, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Obi Anunike,** WR ★★★
2 **Neru N'Shaka,** WR ★★★
3 **Edrick Mathews,** DL ★★★

The Rockets lost a few top commits when former head coach Matt Campbell left for the top job at Iowa State, but new coach Jason Candle and his staff were able to maintain the No. 4 class in the Mid-American Conference per 247Sports. The emphasized five-hour radius was especially good to Toledo as the Rockets did good work in-state and in big cities like Detroit and Pittsburgh.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S3	@ARK. STATE	37-7
S10	Maine	
S17	Fresno State	
S30	@BYU	
O8	@EAST. MICHIGAN	63-20
O15	Bowling Green	44-28
O22	Central Michigan	28-23
O27	Ohio	
N2	@AKRON	
N9	Northern Illinois*	27-32
N16	Ball State	24-10
N25	@WEST. MICHIGAN	30-35

*At Chicago, IL

COACH
Jason Candle
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian Wright (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian George (first year)

FAST FACTS
2015 RECORD: 10-2
(Beat Temple in the Boca Raton Bowl, 32-17)
STADIUM: Glass Bowl (26,248)
TICKETS: 419-530-GOLD
SITE: Toledo, Ohio
WEBSITE: utrockets.com
TWITTER: @ToledoFB

SWANSON: DAVID RICHARD / AP

2 WESTERN MICHIGAN BRONCOS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@NORTHWESTERN	
S.10	North Carolina Central	
S.17	@ILLINOIS	
S.24	Georgia Southern	17-43
O.1	@CENT. MICHIGAN	41-39
O.8	Northern Illinois	19-27
O.15	@AKRON	
O.22	Eastern Michigan	58-28
N.1	@BALL STATE	54-7
N.8	@KENT STATE	
N.19	Buffalo	
N.25	Toledo	35-30

COACH

P.J. Fleck
Fourth year (17-21)
CAREER RECORD: 17-21

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kirk Ciarrocca (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Ed Pinkham (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Middle Tennessee in the Bahamas Bowl, 45-31)
STADIUM: Waldo Stadium (30,200)
TICKETS: 888-4-WMU-TIX
SITE: Kalamazoo, Mich.
WEBSITE: wmubroncos.com
TWITTER: @WMU_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Zach Terrell (6-2, 204, Sr.)
RB	Jarvion Franklin (6-0, 228, Jr.)
LT	Elliot Jordan (6-6, 282, So.)
LG	Jackson Day (6-3, 292, Sr.)
C	John Keenoy (6-3, 305, So.)
RG	Taylor Moton (6-5, 328, Sr.)
RT	Chukwuma Okorafor (6-6, 333, Jr.)
TE	Donnie Ernsberger (6-3, 255, Jr.)
WR	Corey Davis (6-3, 213, Sr.)
WR	Michael Henry (5-11, 189, Sr.)
WR	Carrington Thompson (6-2, 176, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Andre Turner (6-4, 266, Jr.)
DT	Jamar Simpkins (6-2, 266, Sr.)
DT	David Curle (6-3, 303, Sr.)
DE	Keion Adams (6-2, 245, Sr.)
OLB	Edward Rolle (6-2, 204, Sr.)
MLB	Robert Spillane (6-2, 218, Jr.)
OLB	Caleb Bailey (6-0, 236, Jr.)
CB	Darius Phillips (5-10, 191, Jr.)
CB	Sam Beal (6-1, 177, So.)
FS	Asantay Brown (6-0, 203, Jr.)
SS	Justin Ferguson (6-1, 203, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Derrick Mitchell (6-2, 207, So.)
P	Derrick Mitchell (6-2, 207, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Under P.J. Fleck, Western Michigan is now considered one of the standard bearers in the MAC West, along with Toledo and Northern Illinois. This year is no exception. With a slew of returning stars on offense, the Broncos should once again be one of the best teams in the conference.

They were potent on offense a year ago and finished second behind Bowling Green in total yardage (491.1 yards per game). Quarterback Zach Terrell showed remarkable poise and maturity in tossing for 3,526 yards with 29 touchdowns and just nine interceptions. Now a senior, Fleck expects him to improve on his technique.

Zach Terrell

The backfield has an unlimited pool of quality depth, starting with Jarvion Franklin, a freshman sensation in 2014 whose production dropped considerably in 2015 while gaining 735 yards and scoring five touchdowns. Jamauri Bogan (1,051 rushing yards, 16 TDs) will try to unseat Franklin and, when you toss in true freshman Matt Falcon, the Broncos have an embarrassment of rushing riches.

Daniel Braverman took his dynamic receiving skills to the NFL, but back is Corey Davis, who was fourth in the MAC in receptions with 90 while adding 12 touchdowns.

The strength of the defense is in a secondary that features free safety Asantay Brown and cornerback Darius Phillips, who's also a dangerous kick returner. There are lots of concerns about the remainder of the defense, which was middle-of-the-road in total defense while opponents averaged 181.1 yards per game on the ground. Junior Caleb Bailey brings experience at linebacker but another returning starter, Austin Lewis, was forced to quit football because of injuries.

3 NORTHERN ILLINOIS HUSKIES

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@WYOMING	
S.10	@SOUTH FLORIDA	
S.17	San Diego State	
S.24	Western Illinois	
O.1	@BALL STATE	59-41
O.8	@WEST. MICHIGAN	27-19
O.15	Central Michigan	19-29
O.22	Buffalo	41-30
N.1	Bowling Green	14-34
N.9	Toledo*	32-27
N.16	@EAST. MICHIGAN	49-21
N.25	@KENT STATE	

*At Chicago, IL

COACH

Rod Carey
Fourth year (31-12)
CAREER RECORD: 31-12

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Uremovich (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kevin Kane (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-6
(Lost to Boise State in the Poinsettia Bowl, 55-7)
STADIUM: Huskie Stadium (23,595)
TICKETS: 815-753-PACK
SITE: DeKalb, Ill.
WEBSITE: niuhuskies.com
TWITTER: @NIU_Football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Drew Hare (6-1, 218, Sr.)
RB	Joel Bouagnon (6-2, 228, Sr.)
LT	Levon Myers (6-5, 309, Sr.)
LG	Shane Evans (6-4, 302, So.)
C	Luke Shively (6-2, 285, So.)
RG	Josh Ruka (6-5, 312, Sr.)
RT	Max Scharping (6-6, 311, So.)
TE	Shane Wimann (6-4, 252, Jr.)
TE	Ryan Stendler (6-4, 245, Jr.)
WR	Kenny Golladay (6-4, 213, Sr.)
WR	Aregeros Turner (5-11, 172, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Austin Smaha (6-1, 227, Sr.)
NT	Corey Thomas (6-2, 304, Sr.)
DT	Mario Jones (6-0, 281, Sr.)
DE	Ladell Fleming (6-0, 236, Sr.)
OLB	Sean Folliard (6-2, 226, Sr.)
MLB	Jamaal Payton (6-0, 228, Sr.)
OLB	Renard Cheren (6-0, 214, So.)
CB	Anthony Brooks (5-11, 193, Sr.)
CB	Shawun Lurry (5-8, 180, Jr.)
FS	Elijah Campbell (6-0, 195, Jr.)
SS	Brandon Mayes (5-11, 190, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Christian Hagan (6-0, 185, Jr.)
P	Jake Ambrose (5-10, 178, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Since Marshall left the conference in 2004, Northern Illinois has become the class of the MAC. The Huskies enter the season with a record six straight appearances in the MAC Championship Game and have played in eight consecutive bowl games, marking the longest streak in league history.

The strength of the Huskies lies with their defense, led by cornerback Shawun Lurry—the reigning national leader in interceptions with nine—and safety Brandon Mayes, the team's top returning tackler with 87.

At linebacker, Sean Folliard and Renard Cheren combined for 147 tackles and Folliard led NIU with 8.5 tackles for loss. Mario Jones and Corey Thomas return at tackle but end is a major concern because of a lack of experience.

The Huskies return major components from one of the conference's top scoring offenses in wide receivers Kenny Golladay and Aregeros Turner and All-MAC tailback Joel Bouagnon, who rushed for 1,285 yards and scored 18 touchdowns.

Despite losing starters Aidan Conlon and Andrew Ness, the offensive line has depth. Max Scharping, who picked up Freshman All-America honors while playing guard and tackle, could be the anchor up front.

The biggest question mark, however, is the status of quarterback Drew Hare. Hare missed spring practice while recovering from a torn Achilles suffered last November against Toledo. There's depth at the position, including Anthony Maddie, who missed last season with a back injury, and Ryan Graham, who engineered key victories over Toledo and Western Michigan.

The Huskies' foundation was set over a decade ago, so there's always reason for optimism in DeKalb. The defense is respectable and, if Hare can make a comeback, the offense can be better than a year ago.

TERRELL: OTTO KITSINGER / AP

4 CENTRAL MICHIGAN
CHIPPEWAS

John Bonamego's first season as head coach at Central Michigan was certainly memorable. Bonamego took the reins just before the beginning of spring practice, was diagnosed with cancer–he was treated and returned to the sidelines– and eventually captured a share of the MAC West Division title and a trip to the Quick Lane Bowl.

While the Chippewas look to replace key contributors on offense–namely center Nick Beamish and tackle Ramadan Ahmeti–they return one of the league's best quarterbacks in senior Cooper Rush, who is poised for another big season. Last year, Rush completed 66.3 percent of his passes for 3,848 yards and 25 touchdowns.

John Bonamego

Junior tailback Devon Spalding is a potential star, but a broken collarbone on the first offensive drive against Northern Illinois ended his season in early October.

Amari Coleman, a lockdown corner, and Josh Cox lead a secondary that yielded a league-best 193 passing yards per game. End Blake Serpa is gone and takes his edge-rushing ability with him, but junior Joe Ostman, an All-MAC performer in 2014, returns from injury. Ostman registered 10 tackles for loss and three sacks two seasons ago.

The offensive progression during the second half of last season has inspired guarded optimism in Mount Pleasant. The defense, with the return of Ostman, will place just as much experience on that side of the football. Matching last year's record is a reasonable goal.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Presbyterian
S.10	@OKLAHOMA STATE
S.17	UNLV
S.24	@VIRGINIA
O.1	Western Michigan
O.8	Ball State
O.15	@NORTH. ILLINOIS
O.22	@TOLEDO
O.29	Kent State
N.4	@MIAMI (OHIO)
N.15	Ohio
N.22	@EAST. MICHIGAN

QUICK HITS — 2015 RECORD: 7-6

COACH: John Bonamego (second year, 7-6)
CAREER RECORD: 7-6
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Morris Watts (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Greg Colby (second year)
STADIUM: Kelly/Shorts Stadium (30,255)
TICKETS: 888-347-3872
SITE: Mount Pleasant, Mich.
WEBSITE: cmuchippewas.com
TWITTER: @CMU_Football

5 BALL STATE
CARDINALS

Pete Lembo appeared to have Ball State pointed in the right direction. But after a disappointing 3-9 season, the Cardinals' head coach left to become an assistant at Maryland. But the program rebounded nicely with the hiring of Indiana-born Mike Neu, who was most recently quarterbacks coach for the New Orleans Saints.

Neu's first task is the continued development of sophomore quarterback Riley Neal, who showed some bursts of promise as a freshman while finishing with 16 touchdowns and six interceptions. Neu has a solid one-two combination at tailback with junior Darian Green and sophomore James Gilbert gaining 730 and 608 yards, respectively, last season. Graduated Jordan Williams will be missed at wide receiver, but KeVonn Mabon, who registered 70 receptions for 745 yards and a pair of touchdowns, is back.

Riley Neal

First-year defensive coordinator Tim Daoust takes over a unit that was next to last in MAC total defense (521.9 yards per game), but he returns All-MAC performers Joshua Posley at end and Sean Wiggins at linebacker. Posley recorded nine tackles for loss and 2.5 sacks while Wiggins was second on the team in tackles with 95. The good news for Daoust is the unit, although generous in 2015, is filled with juniors and seniors on the two-deep chart.

The important element, however, is the play of Neal. If he plays well, Ball State could be a dark horse in the MAC West race. If not, the Cardinals could be found closer to the cellar.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.2	@GEORGIA STATE
S.10	@INDIANA
S.17	Eastern Kentucky
S.24	@FLA. ATLANTIC
O.1	Northern Illinois
O.8	@CENT. MICHIGAN
O.15	@BUFFALO
O.22	Akron
N.1	Western Michigan
N.8	Eastern Michigan
N.16	@TOLEDO
N.22	@MIAMI (OHIO)

QUICK HITS — 2015 RECORD: 3-9

COACH: Mike Neu (first year)
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Joey Lynch (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tim Daoust (first year)
STADIUM: Scheumann Stadium (22,500)
TICKETS: 765-285-1474
SITE: Muncie, Ind.
WEBSITE: ballstatesports.com
TWITTER: @BallStateFB

6 EASTERN MICHIGAN
EAGLES

Chris Creighton's perennial optimism heading into his third season as head coach at Eastern Michigan is backed up on paper with 19 returning starters. But after a combined two-year mark of 3-21 overall, it's time to see some improvement in the win column.

When Reginald Bell elected to transfer, that cleared the way for Brogan Roback to take over at quarterback without looking over his shoulder. Roback, who completed 60.6 percent of his attempts, has a big arm but needs to play with more consistency. He has a big target in tight end Cody Tuttle, but the receiving corps has to be retooled. Roback should be well protected with all five starters returning on the offensive line, including right guard Darien Terrell, who has 25 starts.

The defense was dead last in the MAC last year, allowing 528.9 yards per game, and the hub of the unit, all-league linebacker Great Ibe, is gone. The lack of turnovers created has been an issue that will hopefully be addressed with the addition of coordinator Neal Neathery from Texas-San Antonio. In six seasons with the Roadrunners, Neathery's defenses registered an average of 21 turnovers per season and ranked 31st nationally in interceptions (14) last season.

Safety Jason Beck, who ranked second behind Ibe in tackles with 80, leads the secondary while tackle Luke Maclean finished with 10 tackles for loss. The loss of Ibe should be eased with the return of linebacker Anthony Zappone, who started the first seven games last season before missing the rest with an injury.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Miss. Valley State
S.10	@MISSOURI
S.17	@CHARLOTTE
S.24	Wyoming
O.1	@BOWLING GREEN
O.8	Toledo
O.15	@OHIO
O.22	@WEST. MICHIGAN
O.29	Miami (Ohio)
N.8	@BALL STATE
N.16	Northern Illinois
N.22	Central Michigan

QUICK HITS — 2015 RECORD: 1-11

COACH: Chris Creighton (third year, 3-21)
CAREER RECORD: 142-67
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kalen DeBoer (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Neal Neathery (first year)
STADIUM: Rynearson Stadium (30,200)
TICKETS: 734-487-2282
SITE: Ypsilanti, Mich.
WEBSITE: emueagles.com
TWITTER: @EMUFB

BONAMEGO: CARLOS OSORIO / AP; NEAL: MATT MARTON / AP

PROJECTED FINISH

MOUNTAIN DIVISION

1. **Boise State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Hawaii Bowl
2. **Colorado State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: New Mexico Bowl
3. **Air Force**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Poinsettia Bowl
4. **New Mexico**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Famous Idaho Potato Bowl
5. **Utah State**
6. **Wyoming**

WEST DIVISION

1. **San Diego State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Las Vegas Bowl
2. **Nevada**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Arizona Bowl
3. **Fresno State**
4. **UNLV**
5. **San Jose State**
6. **Hawaii**

Devonte Boyd, WR, UNLV

New Mexico coach **Bob Davie**

Have-nots showing signs of life but heavyweights will still rule

BY STEVE CARP
Las Vegas Review-Journal

Anytime you get more than half of your conference's teams to play in a bowl game, it gives your commissioner reason to smile.

And yes, Mountain West commissioner Craig Thompson was a happy man at the end of the 2015 football season. Seven of his 12 teams went bowling and two even played each other as Nevada and Colorado State went head-to-head in the Arizona Bowl while San Jose State played in the Cure Bowl despite having a losing record (the Spartans got in based on a high Academic Progress Rate (APR).

So joke all you want. Thompson and his league aren't going to apologize.

But there's a real reason the commissioner is happy: The league's traditional have-nots are showing signs of life. New Mexico finished tied for second in the Mountain Division at 5-3, posted a winning overall record at 7-6 and went to a bowl game. Coach Bob Davie told everyone in Albuquerque he could get the Lobos turned around. It just took him a little more time than he had hoped, but New Mexico isn't going away anytime soon.

At UNLV, Tony Sanchez, who was coaching high school football two years ago, won three games in his first season. That may not seem like a lot, but consider the Rebels were 2-11 the year before under Bobby Hauck. UNLV was more competitive and it appears Sanchez has the program moving in the right direction.

As for the top-tier teams, San Diego State is going to be tough to knock off in the West Division after running the table last year at 8-0 and bringing back all-conference running back Donnel Pumphrey.

In the Mountain Division, Boise State lost some key offensive linemen and some stars in the secondary. But the Broncos have the league's best passing quarterback in sophomore Brett Rypien, who threw for 3,353 yards last year as a freshman. Look for Rypien and Thomas Sperbeck to hook up often as BSU attempts to return to the top of the standings.

Air Force, which won the West with a 6-2 record last season, has a strong defense and just enough offense to compete in the MWC's strongest division. An improved New Mexico and Colorado State return numerous starters on both sides of the ball.

DAVIE: MYRES LEIGHTON / AP; BOYD: JOHN LOCHER / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Consistent Aztecs:** Since the league went to two divisions in 2013, San Diego State has finished either first or second in the West Division.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Chad Carson, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Boise State	28	0	0	25	159.06
2	Colorado State	26	0	0	17	155.23
3	San Diego State	24	0	0	14	139.75
4	UNLV	26	0	0	11	138.66
5	Fresno State	23	0	0	12	135.59
6	San Jose State	18	0	0	11	134.30
7	Utah State	24	0	0	10	130.11
8	New Mexico	21	0	0	9	124.72
9	Hawaii	19	0	0	9	122.99
10	Nevada	22	0	0	9	122.01
11	Air Force	36	0	0	4	109.81
12	Wyoming	24	0	0	5	108.13

ALL-MOUNTAIN WEST

OFFENSE

QB **Brett Rypien,** So., Boise State
RB **Donnel Pumphrey,** Sr., San Diego State
RB **Brian Hill,** Jr., Wyoming
OL **Nico Siragusa,** Sr., San Diego State
OL **Fred Zerblis,** Sr., Colorado State
OL **Chase Roullier,** Sr., Wyoming
OL **Dejon Allen,** Jr., Hawaii
OL **Austin Albrecht,** Sr., Utah State
TE **Billy Freeman,** Sr., San Jose State
WR **Devonte Boyd,** Jr., UNLV
WR **Thomas Sperbeck,** Sr., Boise State

DEFENSE

DL **Alex Barrett,** Sr., San Diego State
DL **Kennedy Tulimasealii,** Sr., Hawaii
DL **Nik D'Avanzo,** Sr., New Mexico
LB **Calvin Munson,** Sr., San Diego State
LB **Christian Tago,** Sr., San Jose State
LB **Tau Lotulelei,** Sr., UNLV
LB **Dakota Cox,** Sr., New Mexico
DB **Damontae Kazee,** Sr., San Diego State
DB **Weston Steelhammer,** Sr., Air Force
DB **Dameon Baber,** So., Nevada
DB **Roland Ladipo,** Sr., Air Force

SPECIALISTS

K **Tyler Rausa,** Sr., Boise State
P **Hayden Hunt,** Sr., Colorado State

PUMPHREY: EUGENE TANNER / AP

↗ NEWSMAKER

Senior running back **Donnel Pumphrey** came into his own last year for San Diego State, rushing for a conference-best 1,653 yards and scoring 17 touchdowns to help the Aztecs run the table in the West Division. He's durable, reliable and his ability to extend drives helps tire out opposing defenses. Barring injury, he should break Marshall Faulk's school record for rushing yardage (4,589) and become SDSU's career leader. He has 4,272 yards coming into his senior season.

↘ OVERRATED

UTAH STATE

The Aggies were expected to be ready to challenge Boise State last year only to have QB Chuckie Keeton succumb to injuries again. Air Force wound up being the team that overtook the Broncos in the Mountain Division.

↘ UNDERRATED

NEW MEXICO

A winning record overall and in the league showed that, given a little time to fix things, Bob Davie can get it done. Heck, the Lobos even played in a bowl game last year, though it was in their own stadium (the New Mexico Bowl).

2 Brett the Rypper: Boise State QB Brett Rypien took the league by storm last year, throwing for 3,353 yards and 20 scores as a freshman. He should have an even brighter sophomore season.

3 Rebel Revival: He may have only won three games last year but coach Tony Sanchez proved it's possible to do good things at UNLV. An easier schedule and more talent will mean more progress.

RATING THE MOUNTAIN WEST

↘ FASTEST RECEIVER
Devonte Boyd, UNLV
He's quick off the line and able to get separation from opposing defenders.

↘ BEST HANDS
Thomas Sperbeck, WR, Boise State
He's Brett Rypien's favorite target for a reason. He catches virtually everything thrown his way.

↘ BEST PASSING QB
Brett Rypien, Boise State
He threw for 3,353 yards last year as a freshman. No one else even came close.

↘ BEST RUNNING QB
Lamar Jordan, New Mexico
Averaged 5.5 yards per carry and was sacked just 13 times.

↘ MOST ELUSIVE RB
Jeremy McNichols, Boise State
Can make sharp cuts and turn short gains into big plays.

↘ BEST ATHLETE
Damontae Kazee, CB, San Diego State
Has the speed to cover all over the field and the strength to make the play anywhere.

↘ BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Kenny Potter, QB, San Jose State
Had just seven interceptions in 270 pass attempts last year. Makes good decisions most of the time.

↘ TOP NFL PROSPECT
Donnel Pumphrey, RB, San Diego State
His size (5-9, 180 pounds) may be a concern, but his skills are not an issue.

↘ TOP FRESHMAN
Nick Gregg, DT, Nevada
A local kid from nearby Sparks who will get an opportunity to compete for playing time in the fall.

↘ HARDEST HITTER
Weston Steelhammer, DB, Air Force
Five interceptions and seven passes broken up. Teams would be wise not to throw at him.

↘ BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Dakota Cox, LB, New Mexico
He's not the biggest or fastest guy, but he makes the play whenever he needs to.

↘ BEST INTERVIEW
Tony Sanchez, head coach, UNLV
His enthusiasm is infectious and he always has something to say, good or bad.

↘ BEST COACH
Rocky Long, San Diego State
Has recruited well, hired good assistants to teach the game and it shows in the Aztecs' performance.

↘ COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Zak Hill, Boise State co-offensive coordinator
It should be fun to see what he does with Brett Rypien now that Rypien has a year's experience as a collegian.

↘ HOTTEST SEAT
Ron Caragher, head coach, San Jose State
Just because he went to a bowl game doesn't get him off the hook for his 6-7 record in 2015.

↘ LOUDEST STADIUM
Albertsons Stadium, Boise State
It's not just the blue "Smurf Turf" that makes this place tough for opponents. The fans are right on top of you and they make the place shake at times.

↘ TOP SCHOLAR
Claude Alexander III, LB, Air Force
The senior holds a 3.3 GPA in Operations Research. He'll be hunting down bad guys once he leaves the field.

BOISE STATE
BRONCOS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

QB **Brett Rypien**

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@LOUISIANA	
S.10	Washington State	
S.24	@OREGON STATE	
O.1	Utah State	26-52
O.8	@NEW MEXICO	24-31
O.15	Colorado State	41-10
O.20	BYU	24-35
O.29	@WYOMING	34-14
N.5	San Jose State	40-23
N.12	@HAWAII	55-0
N.18	UNLV	55-27
N.26	@AIR FORCE	30-37

COACH

Bryan Harsin
Third year (21-6)
CAREER RECORD: 28-11

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Scott Huff (first year)
Zak Hill (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Andy Avalos (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Northern Illinois in the Poinsettia Bowl, 55-7)
STADIUM: Albertsons Stadium (36,387)
TICKETS: 208-426-4737
SITE: Boise, Idaho
WEBSITE: broncosports.com
TWITTER: @BroncoSportsFB

And you thought no one could excite the fans on the blue Smurf Turf after Kellen Moore left a couple of years ago? Meet Brett Rypien, the new star quarterback who could set a lot of records at Boise State if he stays all four years. Rypien led the Mountain West in passing as a freshman, throwing for 3,353 yards and 20 touchdowns. The nephew of former NFL quarterback Mark Rypien was the easy choice for conference Freshman of the Year and don't look for any sophomore jinx from this guy. He has too many weapons around him and he will also be blessed by the fact that the Broncos' renowned depth will allow the offensive line to be quickly rebuilt and protect their most valuable asset.

Thomas Sperbeck led the Mountain West with 88 receptions for 1,412 yards and eight touchdowns while averaging 16 yards per catch. Rypien also likes to check down to running back Jeremy McNichols, who caught 51 passes for 460 yards and six touchdowns last season. Chaz Anderson can also be counted on as he had 42 receptions and averaged 13.8 yards per catch while tight end Jake Roh had 33 catches and averaged 10.8 yards per grab.

And if Rypien decides not to throw it, he can hand it off to McNichols, a second-team all-conference running back as a sophomore. The 5-9 McNichols averaged 111.4 yards per game and scored 20 touchdowns.

The Broncos lost two key offensive linemen in Marcus Henry and Rees Odhiambo. But center Mason Hampton, guards Travis Averill and Steven Baggett along with tackle Mario Yakoo have enough experience between them to hold up to the pressure opposing defenses figure to bring in an attempt to rattle Rypien.

Defensively, Boise State also has enough experience throughout to overcome a defensive line that is being rebuilt. Senior defensive linemen Sam McCaskill and Elliot Hoyte will get after people while the linebacking corps is very good with Gabe Perez, Tanner Vallejo and Ben Weaver. The secondary, which will be anchored by safeties Chanceller James and Cameron Hartsfield, had at least one interception in all but two games last season.

Boise State was second in the league in scoring defense and total defense, allowing just 20.2 points and 318.3 yards per game. Those numbers may be elevated slightly early on as some of the newcomers get comfortable. But there won't be a significant drop-off.

The kicking game is solid with first-team all-conference placekicker Tyler Rausa returning and veteran punter Sean Wale, who averaged 42 yards on 52 punts as a junior.

All signs are pointing toward a return to the top of the division.

5-YEAR RECORD
52-14

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Brett Rypien** (6-2, 195, So.)
RB	**Jeremy McNichols** (5-9, 207, Jr.)
LT	**Archie Lewis** (6-3, 300, Jr.)
LG	**Travis Averill** (6-3, 299, Sr.)
C	**Mason Hampton** (6-3, 293, Jr.)
RG	**Steven Baggett** (6-3, 297, Sr.)
RT	**Mario Yakoo** (6-4, 320, Sr.)
TE	**Jake Roh** (6-3, 226, Jr.)
WR	**Thomas Sperbeck** (6-0, 180, Sr.)
WR	**Chaz Anderson** (5-10, 184, Sr.)
WR	**A.J. Richardson** (6-0, 213, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Sam McCaskill** (6-3, 256, Sr.)
NT	**David Moa** (6-3, 268, So.)
DT	**Elliot Hoyte** (6-4, 276, Sr.)
LB	**Gabe Perez** (6-4, 234, Jr.)
LB	**Ben Weaver** (6-0, 220, Sr.)
LB	**Tanner Vallejo** (6-1, 227, Sr.)
CB	**Raymond Ford** (5-10, 187, Sr.)
CB	**Jonathan Moxey** (5-10, 189, Sr.)
FS	**Cameron Hartsfield** (5-10, 196, Jr.)
SS	**Chanceller James** (6-2, 212, Sr.)
SS	**Dylan Sumner-Gardner** (6-1, 204, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Tyler Rausa** (5-9, 192, Sr.)
P	**Sean Wale** (6-2, 187, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Alexander Mattison,** RB ★★★
2 **Kayode Rufai,** DE ★★★
3 **Julian Carter,** WR ★★★

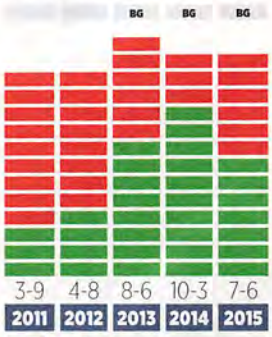
Boise State continued its string of top-ranked recruiting classes in the Mountain West Conference with this group. Eliah Drinkwitz became the second Broncos' offensive coordinator in as many seasons to leave for another OC job (N.C. State), but his recruiting efforts helped BSU land players such as running back Alexander Mattison, who is coming off of back-to-back 2,000-yard prep seasons at San Bernardino (Calif.) High.

RYPIEN: OTTO KITSINGER / AP

COLORADO STATE
RAMS

QB Nick Stevens

5-YEAR RECORD
32-32



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Nick Stevens (6-3, 205, Jr.)
FB	Adam Prentice (6-0, 220, Fr.)
RB	Dalyn Dawkins (5-9, 175, Jr.)
LT	Zack Golditch (6-6, 290, Jr.)
LG	Colby Meeks (6-4, 300, So.)
C	Jake Bennett (6-3, 295, Jr.)
RG	Fred Zerblis (6-3, 295, Sr.)
RT	Nick Callender (6-5, 315, Sr.)
TE	Nolan Peralta (6-3, 245, Sr.)
WR	Xavier Williams (6-4, 215, Jr.)
WR	Deionte Gaines (5-8, 180, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Darnell Thompson (6-5, 275, Jr.)
DT	Johnny Schupp (6-5, 275, Sr.)
NT	Josh Lovingood (6-4, 290, Jr.)
DE	Evan Colorito (6-4, 240, Jr.)
LB	Tre Thomas (6-1, 215, So.)
LB	Kevin Davis (6-3, 240, Sr.)
LB	Kiel Robinson (6-2, 225, Jr.)
CB	Kevin Nutt Jr. (5-10, 190, Jr.)
CB	Tyree Simmons (5-11, 185, Sr.)
FS	Jake Schlager (6-0, 205, Jr.)
SS	Justin Sweet (5-10, 190, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Wyatt Bryan (6-0, 175, So.)
P	Hayden Hunt (6-0, 220, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Devron Davis,** CB ★★★
2. **Christian Colon,** DT ★★★
3. **Anthony Smith,** DE ★★★

Coach Mike Bobo took advantage of his first full recruiting cycle at Colorado State and reeled in the No. 2 class in the Mountain West. His national recruiting ties that were developed during his days as offensive coordinator at Georgia seem to have helped land a class that includes eight junior-college signees who may contribute immediately for the Rams.

STEVENS: RICK SCUTERI / AP

The Rams have gone bowling three straight seasons and, as Mike Bobo gets ready for his second year as coach in Fort Collins, he does so knowing he has a lot of experience at key positions, an administration that is supporting the program and a community which is also backing the Rams.

After a 3-5 start, Colorado State won its final four regular-season games, then lost to Nevada, 28-23, in the Arizona Bowl to finish 7-6.

In Nick Stevens, Bobo has an experienced quarterback who threw for 2,679 yards, 21 touchdowns and just 12 interceptions. Stevens will make the smart play including taking a sack, if necessary, instead of a high-risk attempt that leads to a turnover and a swing in momentum.

What helps Stevens is the experienced offensive line he has to block for him. Senior right tackle Nick Callender and senior right guard Fred Zerblis are both all-conference-quality performers while center Jake Bennett and left tackle Zack Golditch have experience and as juniors, still have their best days ahead of them.

Bobo would like to have a balanced attack and in junior running back Dalyn Dawkins, he's got a shifty runner who averaged 5.1 yards per carry as a sophomore. The former Purdue player figures to get a lot of touches, both carrying and receiving (he had 24 catches last year).

One target Stevens will miss throwing to will be Rashard Higgins, who was second in the conference in receptions as a junior with 75. Higgins opted to enter his name in the NFL Draft and look for Xavier Williams to be the new favorite target along with Deionte Gaines. That duo combined for 32 receptions last year.

Defensively, the Rams will look to their linebackers to hold down the fort. Senior Kevin Davis and junior Kiel Robinson are dependable, understand their assignments and can make plays. They may have to pressure the opposing quarterback some as CSU is rebuilding its entire front four. The secondary will also be young as senior cornerback Tyree Simmons is the most experienced player. Simmons is coming off his best year, having an interception and nine passes broken up along with 38 total tackles, 30 of them unassisted.

The kicking game is in great shape as second-team all-conference punter Hayden Hunt averaged 46 yards on 52 punts his junior year. Sophomore placekicker Wyatt Bryan was 16-for-22 on field-goal attempts as a freshman and had a long of 44 yards.

If the Rams are serious about winning the Mountain Division, they better show up Oct. 8 when they host Utah State and the following week when they travel to Boise State.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Colorado*	24-27
S.10	UTSA	33-31
S.17	Northern Colorado	
S.24	@MINNESOTA	20-23
O.1	Wyoming	26-7
O.8	Utah State	18-33
O.15	@BOISE STATE	10-41
O.22	@UNLV	49-35
N.5	Fresno State	34-31
N.12	@AIR FORCE	38-23
N.19	New Mexico	28-21
N.26	@SAN DIEGO STATE	17-41

*At Denver, CO

COACH

Mike Bobo
Second year (7-6)
CAREER RECORD: 7-6

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Will Friend (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Marty English (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Nevada in the Arizona Bowl, 28-23)
STADIUM: Hughes Stadium (32,500)
TICKETS: 800-491-RAMS
SITE: Fort Collins, Colo.
WEBSITE: csurams.com
TWITTER: @CSUFootball

3 AIR FORCE
FALCONS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Abilene Christian	
S.10	Georgia State	
S.24	@UTAH STATE	35-28
O.1	Navy	11-33
O.8	@WYOMING	31-17
O.15	New Mexico*	35-47
O.22	Hawaii	58-7
O.29	@FRESNO STATE	42-14
N.5	@ARMY	20-3
N.12	Colorado State	23-38
N.19	@SAN JOSE STATE	37-16
N.26	Boise State	37-30

At Dallas, TX

COACH

Troy Calhoun
10th year (67-50)
CAREER RECORD: 67-50

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Thiessen (seventh year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Steve Russ (fifth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-6
(Lost to California in the Armed Forces Bowl, 55-36)
STADIUM: Falcon Stadium (46,692)
TICKETS: 719-472-1895
SITE: Colorado Springs, Colo.
WEBSITE: goairforcefalcons.com
TWITTER: @AFFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Nate Romine (5-11, 195, Jr.)
RB	Jacobi Owens (6-0, 202, Sr.)
RB	Timothy McVey (5-9, 190, Jr.)
LT	James Rast (6-4, 265, Jr.)
LG	Colin Sandor (6-2, 275, Sr.)
C	Alex Norton (6-2, 288, Jr.)
RG	Allen Caunitz (6-4, 250, Sr.)
RT	Jake Barnhorst (6-4, 260, Jr.)
TE	Ryan Reffitt (6-5, 230, Jr.)
WR	Jalen Robinette (6-4, 215, Sr.)
WR	Tyler Williams (5-10, 185, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Lochlin Deeks (6-4, 265, Sr.)
DT	Samuel Byers (6-5, 275, Sr.)
DE	Santo Coppola (6-4, 285, Jr.)
LB	D.J. Dunn Jr. (6-3, 240, Sr.)
LB	Claude Alexander III (6-1, 225, Sr.)
LB	Jacob Onyechi (6-1, 195, Sr.)
LB	Ryan Watson (6-3, 230, Sr.)
CB	Roland Ladipo (5-10, 185, Sr.)
CB	Jesse Washington (6-0, 185, Sr.)
FS	Brodie Hicks (6-2, 200, Sr.)
SS	Weston Steelhammer (6-2, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Luke Strebel (5-10, 170, Jr.)
P	Luke Strebel (5-10, 170, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Falcons were a pleasant surprise in 2015, winning the Mountain Division with a 6-2 record. But the season ended on a sour note as Air Force lost its final three, including its bowl game, falling to California, 55-36, in the Armed Forces Bowl.

Still, an 8-6 record is nothing to be ashamed of. Coach Troy Calhoun has 17 starters back from last year's team and, as long as his defense shows up every week, Air Force will be in most games. The Falcons allowed just 25.5 points per game last year, third in the league to San Diego State (16.4 points per game) and Boise State (20.2).

The secondary returns intact, led by strong safety Weston Steelhammer, who had 80 total tackles, and free safety Brodie Hicks (67). Senior corners Jesse Washington and Roland Ladipo are very smart and experienced. And with returning linemen Samuel Byers and Lochlin Deeks back for their senior seasons and linebackers D.J. Dunn Jr. and Claude Alexander III also returning for their final year, Air Force has a group that can hold its own.

On offense, the Falcons have to replace quarterback Karson Roberts and that's always a cause for concern as the signal-caller is vital to running the option attack. The offensive line is also being rebuilt as only left guard Colin Sandor and center Alex Norton are back.

Nate Romine was hurt early in the season and is coming off major knee surgery. If he's right come August, he could wind up as Air Force's starting quarterback.

Regardless of who is under center, it probably means a lot of touches for senior tailback Jacobi Owens, who rushed for 1,092 yards and scored seven touchdowns last year. Owens finished seventh in MWC rushing for 2015.

Luke Strebel will handle the kicking and punting chores. He was 10-for-11 on field goals as a sophomore.

4 NEW MEXICO
LOBOS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	South Dakota	
S.10	@NEW MEX. STATE	38-29
S.17	@RUTGERS	
O.1	San Jose State	21-31
O.8	Boise State	31-24
O.15	Air Force*	47-35
O.22	Louisiana-Monroe	
O.29	@HAWAII	28-27
N.5	Nevada	17-35
N.12	@UTAH STATE	14-13
N.19	@COLO. STATE	21-28
N.26	Wyoming	38-28

At Dallas, TX

COACH

Bob Davie
Fifth year (18-32)
CAREER RECORD: 53-57

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Bob DeBesse (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: Kevin Cosgrove (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Lost to Arizona in the New Mexico Bowl, 45-37)
STADIUM: University Stadium (39,224)
TICKETS: 800-955-HOWL
SITE: Albuquerque, N.M.
WEBSITE: golobos.com
TWITTER: @NewMexicoFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Lamar Jordan (5-10, 190, Jr.)
RB	Teriyon Gipson (5-8, 182, Sr.)
RB	Richard McQuarley (5-11, 218, Jr.)
LT	Reno Henderson (6-4, 275, Sr.)
LG	Chris Lewis (6-3, 301, Sr.)
C	Tevita Fonua (6-2, 308, Sr.)
RG	Jack Ziltz (6-2, 275, Sr.)
RT	Aaron Jenkins (6-1, 312, So.)
TE	Nick Lehman (6-3, 234, Sr.)
WR	Dameon Gamblin (5-10, 174, Sr.)
WR	Delane Hart-Johnson (6-4, 210, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Nik D'Avanzo (6-3, 281, Sr.)
DT	William Udeh (6-0, 294, Sr.)
DT	Kene Okonkwo (6-3, 270, Jr.)
DE	Garrett Hughes (6-1, 267, Jr.)
LB	Dakota Cox (6-0, 231, Sr.)
LB	Kimmie Carson (6-0, 213, Jr.)
LB	Donnie White (6-1, 240, Sr.)
CB	Nias Martin (5-10, 175, Sr.)
CB	Isaiah Brown (5-11, 187, Sr.)
FS	Daniel Henry (6-1, 196, Sr.)
SS	Ryan Santos (5-10, 190, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jason Sanders (5-11, 186, Jr.)
P	Sam Gentry (6-6, 242, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

After some tough times and lean years, things finally appear to be turning around for the Lobos. They posted a winning record (7-6) last season for the first time since 2007 (9-4). They also went to a bowl game for the first time since '07.

Credit coach Bob Davie, his staff and his players, as well as the New Mexico administration, for staying the course. This has been a difficult rebuild in every aspect. But with improved recruiting, better facilities and players who have stuck with it, Davie has the program pointed in the right direction.

The question is, can they take the next step and contend for the division championship? If Boise State, Colorado State and Air Force weren't so loaded, it would be worth taking a flyer on the Lobos. Nobody's putting any pressure on them to win the division and, while Davie and his players aspire to play for titles, they know there's still work left.

The defense has 10 starters returning and that is an encouraging sign. New Mexico may have ranked eighth in the Mountain West in scoring defense last year at 28.4 points allowed per game, but the Lobos were just two points away from being No. 4. So if they could give up one less field goal per game this year, they can move up in that category.

Linebacker Dakota Cox leads the defense as he had 97 tackles and five sacks as a junior. Along with Donnie White and Kimmie Carson, the Lobos have three very active guys who can all make plays.

Davie has handed the keys for the offense to junior quarterback Lamar Jordan and, so far, he has proven to be responsible operating it. He passed for 1,045 yards and five touchdowns as a sophomore, but he also had eight interceptions. It would be nice if Jordan still had Jhurell Pressley around to run the ball. Instead, Teriyon Gipson will be the featured back after rushing for 850 yards and six touchdowns in 2015.

5 UTAH STATE AGGIES

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Weber State	
S.10	@USC	
S.17	Arkansas State	
S.24	Air Force	28-35
O.1	@BOISE STATE	52-26
O.8	@COLO. STATE	33-18
O.22	Fresno State	56-14
O.29	San Diego State	14-48
N.5	@WYOMING	58-27
N.12	New Mexico	13-14
N.19	@NEVADA	31-27
N.26	@BYU	28-51

COACH

Matt Wells
Fourth year (25-16)
CAREER RECORD: 25-16

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Luke Wells (fourth year)
Jovon Bouknight (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kendrick Shaver (first year)
Frank Maile (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to Akron in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl, 23-21)
STADIUM: Maverik Stadium (25,513)
TICKETS: 888-UState-1
SITE: Logan, Utah
WEBSITE: utahstateaggies.com
TWITTER: @USUFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Kent Myers** (6-0, 195, Jr.)
RB	**Devante Mays** (5-11, 220, Sr.)
RB	**LaJuan Hunt** (5-8, 195, Jr.)
LT	**Austin Albrecht** (6-5, 295, Sr.)
LG	**Tyshon Mosley** (6-5, 305, Jr.)
C	**Austin Stephens** (6-3, 305, Sr.)
RG	**Jarom Ioane** (6-6, 330, Jr.)
RT	**Jake Simonich** (6-5, 300, Sr.)
TE	**Wyatt Houston** (6-5, 255, Sr.)
WR	**Braelon Roberts** (6-3, 200, Jr.)
WR	**Andrew Rodriguez** (5-10, 185, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Ricky Ali'ifua** (6-2, 285, Sr.)
NG	**Travis Seefeldt** (6-2, 302, Sr.)
DE	**Christopher 'Unga** (6-1, 285, Fr.)
LB	**Brock Carmen** (6-3, 230, Sr.)
LB	**Alex Huerta** (6-2, 230, Jr.)
LB	**Trevon Hansen** (6-0, 235, Jr.)
LB	**Derek Larsen** (6-3, 230, So.)
CB	**Jalen Davis** (5-10, 175, Jr.)
CB	**Jentz Painter** (5-8, 175, Sr.)
FS	**Devin Centers** (5-9, 200, Sr.)
SS	**Aaron Wade** (6-1, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Jake Thompson** (6-0, 215, Sr.)
P	**Aaron Dalton** (6-4, 220, So.)

Sporting News All-American

For the first time in what seems like forever, Chuckie Keeton will not be playing quarterback for the Aggies. The talented but oft-injured Keeton has moved on and Kent Myers, who played in nine games last year while throwing for 1,593 yards and 16 touchdowns, will be in charge as he enters his junior year.

Utah State ran the ball effectively and look for that to continue as Devante Mays and LaJuan Hunt return to give the offense a solid ground game. Mays averaged 5.9 yards per carry and ran for 966 yards and scored nine touchdowns. Hunt had only 106 rushing attempts and averaged only 3.2 yards on those carries, but he did produce five touchdowns.

The Aggies have a talented and experienced offensive line anchored by Austin Albrecht, Jake Simonich and Austin Stephens. The three seniors will make sure Myers gets time to throw and also open up holes for Mays and Hunt to run through.

Utah State is faced with a big challenge ahead replacing linebacker Nick Vigil, who has been one of the team's top tacklers the past couple of years. They also have to replace fellow linebacker Kyler Fackrell, who was Vigil's tag-team partner and had four sacks as well as LT Filiaga, who had 78 tackles and was a nice complement to Vigil and Fackrell. But the Aggies have a strong secondary that is experienced and is led by safety Devin Centers and cornerback Jalen Davis.

Coach Matt Wells believes he has a recruiting class that can fill some needs immediately while adding quality depth in other areas. Among the better pickups was freshman wideout Rayshad Lewis, the son of former NFL All-Pro linebacker Ray Lewis.

The Aggies were in the upper half of both scoring offense and scoring defense in the Mountain West last year. It still resulted in a losing record at 6-7. A big problem was finding a way to win on the road. Utah State was 1-5 away from Maverik Stadium.

6 WYOMING COWBOYS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Northern Illinois	
S.10	@NEBRASKA	
S.17	UC Davis	
S.24	@EAST. MICHIGAN	29-48
O.1	@COLO. STATE	7-26
O.8	Air Force	17-31
O.22	@NEVADA	28-21
O.29	Boise State	14-34
N.5	Utah State	27-58
N.12	@UNLV	35-28
N.19	San Diego State	3-38
N.26	@NEW MEXICO	28-38

COACH

Craig Bohl
Third year (6-18)
CAREER RECORD: 110-50

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Brent Vigen (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Steve Stanard (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 2-10
STADIUM: War Memorial Stadium (29,181)
TICKETS: 877-WYO-FAN1
SITE: Laramie, Wyo.
WEBSITE: gowyo.com
TWITTER: @wyo_football

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Josh Allen** (6-5, 230, So.)
FB	**Drew Van Maanen** (6-1, 240, Jr.)
RB	**Brian Hill** (6-1, 219, Jr.)
LT	**Zach Wallace** (6-7, 297, So.)
LG	**Chase Roullier** (6-4, 315, Sr.)
C	**Charlie Renfree** (6-3, 281, Jr.)
RG	**Kaden Jackson** (6-2, 294, So.)
RT	**Ryan Cummings** (6-6, 320, Jr.)
TE	**Jacob Hollister** (6-4, 239, Sr.)
WR	**Jake Maulhardt** (6-6, 239, Sr.)
WR	**Tanner Gentry** (6-2, 215, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Carl Granderson** (6-5, 227, So.)
NT	**Chase Appleby** (6-0, 268, Sr.)
DT	**Conner Cain** (6-4, 284, So.)
DE	**Kevin Prosser** (6-2, 215, So.)
LB	**D.J. May** (5-11, 211, Sr.)
LB	**Lucas Wacha** (6-1, 230, Sr.)
LB	**Luis Bach** (6-2, 221, So.)
CB	**Robert Priester** (5-9, 180, Jr.)
CB	**Antonio Hull** (5-10, 188, So.)
FS	**Andrew Wingard** (6-0, 207, So.)
SS	**Marcus Epps** (6-0, 203, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Justin Martin** (5-10, 187, Sr.)
P	**Ethan Wood** (6-3, 176, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Craig Bohl is finding coaching at this level of college football is a lot tougher than when he was winning all those national championships with North Dakota State at the Football Championship Subdivision level. After following up a 4-8 opening season in Laramie with a 2-10 record and last-place finish in the Mountain Division in 2015, the pressure is on Bohl to get things turned around.

The Cowboys struggled on both sides of the ball last year, giving up an average of 34 points per game while averaging just 19 points on offense. You're going to struggle at any level of football averaging those numbers.

So what can Bohl do to change things? For starters, he needs to create competition from within and get the very best out of those he has available. And when you're 2-10, nobody's job should be safe.

That is, unless you're running back Brian Hill. The junior led the league in rushing in 2015, averaging 135.9 yards per game and 5.8 yards per carry. He also scored six touchdowns. So he better be on the field a lot. He has added 15 pounds in the offseason in the hopes of making himself stronger and more durable.

Another player who should be on the field a lot is senior wide receiver Jake Maulhardt, who had 57 receptions, averaged 11.5 yards per catch and scored eight touchdowns in 2015. He and Hill accounted for nearly half of Wyoming's 32 touchdowns.

As for who will get the ball to Maulhardt, there's a battle between sophomores Josh Allen and Nick Smith to see who will start. Bohl probably won't name a starter until just before Wyoming's Sept. 3 season opener against Northern Illinois in Laramie.

Defensively, there are good players such as free safety Andrew Wingard, strong safety Marcus Epps and linebackers Lucas Wacha and D.J. May, but there's little depth and All-MWC end Eddie Yarbrough is gone.

SAN DIEGO STATE
AZTECS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB **Donnel Pumphrey**

There was much to celebrate on Montezuma Mesa last fall. An undefeated conference season. A Mountain West championship. A bowl game victory. An All-America running back.

And given the number of returning players and the positive momentum surrounding coach Rocky Long's program, there's no reason to believe the Aztecs can't repeat most of their accomplishments of 2015. San Diego State is riding a 10-game win streak heading into its Sept. 3 opener against New Hampshire.

The team came out of spring drills healthy and confident and there was a lot of competition for starting spots. It's the kind of spring that has coaches wishing it was already September.

The Aztecs will be led by Donnel Pumphrey, their outstanding running back who led the league in rushing with 1,653 yards and also scored 17 touchdowns while averaging 5.3 yards a carry. And even though opposing teams know he's going to get the ball, they still struggle to stop Pumphrey.

Part of it is Pumphrey's ability to cut and elude tacklers and be able to quickly accelerate once he gets some daylight. The other thing is he has an excellent offensive line blocking for him. Guard Nico Siragusa is an all-conference performer and center Arthur Flores is athletic and intelligent. State also has a pair of huge bookends in 6-7 tackles Kwayde Miller and Joe Salcedo.

For the quarterback, whoever that may be, it's a true blessing to have that kind of protection up front. Christian Chapman, a sophomore, was listed at the top of the depth chart after spring practice concluded in late March. But redshirt freshman Ryan Agnew and junior-college transfer Jimmy Walker were pushing him and that battle may continue well into fall practice.

Defensively, San Diego State will be led by three senior all-conference performers: end Alex Barrett, outside linebacker Calvin Munson and cornerback Damontae Kazee, who was the conference's Defensive Player of the Year in 2015. Kazee had eight interceptions and broke up seven more passes along with registering a team-high 58 solo tackles.

The Aztecs led the MWC in total defense, allowing just 287.3 yards and 16.4 points per game. There is speed throughout the starting 11 and they are able to get to the ball and make plays most teams find themselves chasing down. The secondary, in particular, is very quick with seniors Na'im McGee and Malik Smith and junior Kameron Kelly.

In addition to having the conference's reigning Player of the Year on both offense and defense, SDSU also had the Special Teams Player of the Year in kick returner Rashaad Penny, who averaged 33.5 yards on 24 kick returns and had three touchdowns. No other FBS school won all three league awards.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	New Hampshire	
S.10	California	7-35
S.17	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	
O.1	@SOUTH ALABAMA	27-34
O.8	UNLV	52-14
O.15	@FRESNO STATE	21-7
O.22	San Jose State	30-7
O.29	@UTAH STATE	48-14
N.5	Hawaii	28-14
N.12	@NEVADA	31-14
N.19	@WYOMING	38-3
N.26	Colorado State	41-17

COACH

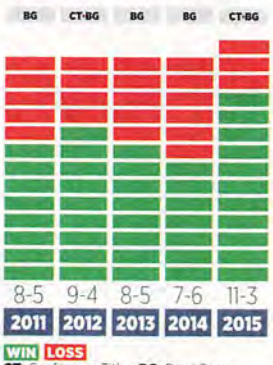
Rocky Long
Sixth year (43-23)
CAREER RECORD: 108-92

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jeff Horton (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Rocky Long (eighth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-3
(Beat Cincinnati in the Hawaii Bowl, 42-7)
STADIUM: Qualcomm Stadium (70,561)
TICKETS: 619-283-SDSU
SITE: San Diego
WEBSITE: goaztecs.com
TWITTER: @Aztec_Football

5-YEAR RECORD
43-23



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Christian Chapman (6-0, 200, So.)
FB	Nick Bawden (6-3, 220, Jr.)
RB	Donnel Pumphrey (5-9, 180, Sr.)
LT	Kwayde Miller (6-7, 310, Sr.)
LG	Nico Siragusa (6-5, 335, Sr.)
C	Arthur Flores (6-5, 305, Sr.)
RG	Antonio Rosales (6-4, 295, Jr.)
RT	Joe Salcedo (6-7, 300, So.)
TE	Daniel Brunskill (6-5, 250, Sr.)
WR	Mikah Holder (6-0, 180, Jr.)
WR	Chase Favreau (6-1, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Kyle Kelley (6-3, 260, Sr.)
DT	Sergio Phillips (6-2, 300, Jr.)
DE	Alex Barrett (6-3, 260, Sr.)
LB	Calvin Munson (6-1, 240, Sr.)
LB	Randy Ricks (6-5, 230, Sr.)
LB	Austin Wyatt-Thayer (6-5, 230, Sr.)
CB	Billy Vaughn Jr. (6-1, 185, Jr.)
CB	Damontae Kazee (5-11, 185, Sr.)
FS	Malik Smith (6-0, 190, Sr.)
SS	Na'im McGee (6-0, 200, Sr.)
SS	Kameron Kelly (6-2, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	John Baron II (5-11, 190, So.)
P	Tanner Blain (6-0, 205, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Tayler Hawkins,** ATH ★★★
2 **Chase Jasmin,** RB ★★★
3 **Trenton Thompson,** S ★★★

The 2015 Mountain West Conference champions also had success on the recruiting trail, winning some head-to-head battles against the Pac-12 to land some of California's best athletes. Tayler Hawkins could play on either side of the ball and running back Chase Jasmin chose the Aztecs over offers from five Pac-12 programs.

PUMPHREY: ALEX GALLARDO / AP

NEVADA
WOLF PACK

RB James Butler

BUTLER: CAITHEEN ALLISON / AP

5-YEAR RECORD
32-32

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Tyler Stewart (6-4, 220, Sr.)
RB	James Butler (5-9, 200, Jr.)
RB	Akeel Lynch (5-11, 220, Sr.)
LT	Austin Corbett (6-4, 300, Jr.)
LG	Jake Nelson (6-5, 275, So.)
C	Thomas Newton (6-1, 250, Jr.)
RG	Jeremy Macauley (6-1, 300, Sr.)
RT	Jacob Henry (6-4, 280, Sr.)
TE	Jarred Gipson (6-1, 240, Sr.)
WR	Hasaan Henderson (6-5, 220, Sr.)
WR	Jerico Richardson (5-11, 190, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Patrick Choudja (6-3, 235, Jr.)
NG	Salesa Faraimo (6-2, 290, Sr.)
DE	Kalei Meyer (6-1, 270, So.)
LB	Gabe Sewell (6-0, 230, Fr.)
LB	Randy Uzoma (6-1, 205, Sr.)
LB	Travis Wilson (6-1, 215, Jr.)
LB	L.J. Jackson (6-0, 200, Sr.)
CB	Elijah Mitchell (5-8, 180, Sr.)
CB	Kendall Johnson (6-0, 185, Jr.)
FS	Dameon Baber (5-11, 180, So.)
SS	Asauni Rufus (6-0, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Brent Zuzo (5-10, 180, Sr.)
P	Alex Boy (6-3, 200, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1. **Trevion Armstrong,** WR ★★★
2. **Nakita Long,** DT ★★★
3. **Alec Simpson,** LB ★★★

This class will help stock the Nevada roster with talent and depth in some key areas, including at linebacker and the offensive skill positions. California three-star 'backers Alec Simpson, Lawson Hall and Darius Powe combined for 340 tackles in 2015 and 1,000-yard running backs Isaiah Hamilton and Jaxson Kincaide will be joined in the Wolf Pack backfield by Penn State graduate transfer Akeel Lynch.

Not one to stand pat, Wolf Pack coach Brian Polian is shaking things up. Tim Cramsey, who made Montana State's offense one of the best in the FCS, takes over as Nevada's offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach. While at Montana State, the Bobcats averaged 37.6 points and 475 yards per game during Cramsey's three years there.

In fact, the entire offensive coaching staff is new, so look for some new wrinkles this season. As for who will be the quarterback, sophomore Ty Gangi looked good in spring practice and is pushing incumbent senior Tyler Stewart for the starting job.

They will have some familiar faces to throw to as Nevada returns its top four receivers, led by Jerico Richardson and Hasaan Henderson. Last season, Richardson had 68 receptions for 750 yards and scored five touchdowns while Henderson made 52 catches for 741 yards and four TDs. Wyatt Demps, who had 27 receptions last year, is also back, along with tight end Jarred Gipson, who had only 19 receptions but five of them were touchdowns. There's depth here, too, as Brayden Sanchez has recovered from an ACL injury that knocked him out after the first game last year, and redshirt freshman Dominic Christian is talented and expected to get on the field as well.

And if that's not enough, Nevada returns James Butler at running back. The junior rushed for 1,342 yards and scored 10 touchdowns last season, fourth best among running backs in the Mountain West.

Defensively, Nevada improved from seventh to fifth in scoring defense in 2015, allowing 26.8 points a game. There's experience throughout, especially in the secondary where Asauni Rufus and Dameon Baber played well. The Wolf Pack will need to replace two-time All-MWC defensive end/linebacker Ian Seau, but Polian has recruited enough depth his first three years that whoever wins the spots along the line and at linebacker should be ready to make an impact.

For Polian, it's important the defense continue to make strides. One newcomer who might be able to help right away is defensive lineman Nick Gregg, a 6-0, 294-pound freshman from nearby Sparks, Nev. He has quick feet and is very strong, which makes for an ideal pass rusher.

Senior placekicker Brent Zuzo has proven to be reliable. He was second-team all-conference last year. Punter Alex Boy averaged 42 yards per punt as a junior. Elijah Mitchell and Andrew Celis are solid return men for kickoffs and punts, respectively.

The Wolf Pack will enjoy playing home games in a refurbished Mackay Stadium, but road trips to Notre Dame and Purdue in September may not be so pleasant.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Cal Poly	
S.10	@NOTRE DAME	
S.17	Buffalo	24-21
S.24	@PURDUE	
O.1	@HAWAII	30-20
O.8	Fresno State	30-16
O.15	@SAN JOSE STATE	37-34
O.22	Wyoming	21-28
N.5	@NEW MEXICO	35-17
N.12	San Diego State	14-31
N.19	Utah State	27-31
N.26	@UNLV	17-23

COACH

Brian Polian
Fourth year (18-20)
CAREER RECORD: 18-20

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tim Cramsey (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Scott Boone (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Colorado State in the Arizona Bowl, 28-23)
STADIUM: Mackay Stadium (26,000)
TICKETS: 775-348-PACK
SITE: Reno, Nev.
WEBSITE: nevadawolfpack.com
TWITTER: @NevadaFootball

3 FRESNO STATE BULLDOGS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@NEBRASKA	
S.10	Sacramento State	
S.17	@TOLEDO	
S.24	Tulsa	
O.1	@UNLV	31-28
O.8	@NEVADA	16-30
O.15	San Diego State	7-21
O.22	@UTAH STATE	14-56
O.29	Air Force	14-42
N.5	@COLO. STATE	31-34
N.19	Hawaii	42-14
N.26	San Jose State	23-49

COACH

Tim DeRuyter
Fifth year (29-23)
CAREER RECORD: 30-23

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Eric Kiesau (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Lorenzo Ward (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Bulldog Stadium (41,031)
TICKETS: 559-278-DOGS
SITE: Fresno, Calif.
WEBSITE: gobulldogs.com
TWITTER: @FresnoStateFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Chason Virgil (6-1, 184, Fr.)
RB	Dejonte O'Neal (5-7, 166, So.)
LT	Christian Cronk (6-5, 290, So.)
LG	Aaron Mitchell (6-2, 300, Jr.)
C	Jacob Vazquez (6-3, 287, Sr.)
RG	Micah St. Andrew (6-3, 327, So.)
RT	David Patterson (6-4, 288, Jr.)
TE	Chad Olsen (6-5, 236, Jr.)
WR	Aaron Peck (6-3, 217, Sr.)
WR	KeeSean Johnson (6-1, 190, So.)
WR	Da'Mari Scott (6-0, 211, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Nathan Madsen (6-4, 290, Jr.)
NG	Malik Forrester (6-1, 315, Jr.)
DE	Nick Kristofors (6-3, 268, Sr.)
LB	Brandon Hughes (6-3, 223, Sr.)
LB	Nela Otukolo (5-11, 234, So.)
LB	Jeff Camilli (6-2, 255, Sr.)
LB	Tobenna Okeke (6-2, 237, Jr.)
CB	Jamal Ellis (5-10, 179, Sr.)
CB	Tyquwan Glass (5-11, 185, Sr.)
FS	DeShawn Potts (6-0, 190, So.)
SS	Stratton Brown (6-2, 196, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Kody Kroening (5-10, 150, Jr.)
P	Blake Cusick (6-2, 175, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Bulldogs had trouble stopping opponents last year and it reflected in the team's disappointing 3-9 overall record and fourth-place finish in the MWC's West Division. Fresno State allowed an average of 38.1 points a game and, if the Bulldogs are going to turn things around, it starts on defense.

Tim DeRuyter shook things up in the offseason, bringing in new coordinators on both sides of the ball. Lorenzo Ward, who was the defensive coordinator at South Carolina, takes over the defense, while Eric Kiesau, who had worked for Nick Saban at Alabama, becomes Fresno State's offensive coordinator. In all, six new assistants are on DeRuyter's 2016 staff.

The Bulldogs will play a 3-4 scheme on defense and inside linebacker Jeff Camilli is coming off a strong year that saw him make 76 tackles and intercept two passes. Cornerback Jamal Ellis is also experienced and he and Tyquwan Glass will lead what should be an improved secondary.

Up front, Nathan Madsen will be joined by Nick Kristofors at defensive end and noseguard Malik Forrester. If they can get pressure on the opposing quarterback, it will go a long way toward making the entire unit better. Look for the Bulldogs to blitz with their linebackers to make sure pressure is coming.

Offensively, there's a battle for the starting job at quarterback. Kilton Anderson, who started five games last year, is being pushed by Chason Virgil. Fresno State averaged just 22.2 points a game last year so whoever gets the job better be prepared to stick the ball in the end zone.

Receiver Jamire Jordan led all Mountain West freshmen in receptions with 46, receiving yards (540) and five touchdowns. He will be an inviting target for whoever gets the QB job. So will tight end Chad Olsen, who had 19 receptions and three TDs.

On the line, left guard Aaron Mitchell is solid and Jacob Vazquez is versatile.

4 UNLV REBELS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Jackson State	
S.10	@UCLA	3-37
S.17	@CENT. MICHIGAN	
S.24	Idaho	
O.1	Fresno State	28-31
O.8	@SAN DIEGO STATE	14-52
O.15	@HAWAII	41-21
O.22	Colorado State	35-49
O.29	@SAN JOSE STATE	27-33
N.12	Wyoming	28-35
N.18	@BOISE STATE	27-55
N.26	Nevada	23-17

COACH

Tony Sanchez
Second year (3-9)
CAREER RECORD: 3-9

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Barney Cotton (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Kent Baer (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Sam Boyd Stadium (35,500)
TICKETS: 702-739-FANS
SITE: Las Vegas
WEBSITE: unlvrebels.com
TWITTER: @unlvfootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Johnny Stanton (6-2, 245, Jr.)
FB	Marc Philippi (5-10, 225, Sr.)
RB	Keith Whitely (5-9, 190, Sr.)
LT	Kyle Saxelid (6-7, 290, Jr.)
LG	Michael Chevalier (6-3, 300, Jr.)
C	Will Kreitler (6-0, 300, Sr.)
RG	Charles Howard (6-5, 340, Sr.)
RT	J'Ondray Sanders (6-5, 260, Jr.)
TE	Andrew Price (6-6, 255, Sr.)
WR	Devonte Boyd (6-1, 175, Jr.)
WR	Kendal Keys (6-4, 200, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Mark Finau (6-3, 230, Jr.)
DT	Mike Hughes Jr. (6-2, 310, Jr.)
DT	Dominic Baldwin (6-5, 275, Sr.)
DE	Antonio Zepeda (6-6, 265, Jr.)
LB	Matt Lea (5-10, 215, Jr.)
LB	Tau Lotulelei (6-1, 235, Sr.)
LB	Ryan McAleenan (6-2, 220, Sr.)
CB	Tim Hough (5-11, 195, So.)
CB	Torry McTyer (6-0, 180, Sr.)
FS	Troy Hawthorne (6-3, 210, Sr.)
SS	Darius Mouton (5-10, 165, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Nicolai Bornand (6-1, 225, Sr.)
P	Thomas Manning (6-2, 170, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

Tony Sanchez is quickly making believers of the skeptics who claim the Rebels are simply incapable of playing winning football. He is not accepting defeat or settling for mediocrity. After winning three games in his first year, Sanchez, who was coaching high school football at this time two years ago, believes the program is ready to make a significant move forward.

He's hoping the defense, which was improved a year ago, keeps getting better. Seven starters return, including linebacker Tau Lotulelei and cornerback Torry McTyer. Both are playmakers and are setting the tone for a unit that plays aggressively but also intelligently.

Up front, junior linemen Mark Finau and Mike Hughes Jr. should cause enough havoc to help create turnovers and give the offense better field position. UNLV was fourth in the Mountain West in total offense last season, averaging 404.7 yards per game.

The Rebels have two outstanding receivers in juniors Devonte Boyd and Kendal Keys. But who will get them the ball? The starting quarterback position was a key battle in spring practice and the winner may not be decided until well into fall drills. Redshirt freshman Dalton Sneed and former Nebraska Cornhusker Johnny Stanton were neck-and-neck and maybe Sanchez plays both, though that is not the ideal situation.

Senior running back Keith Whitely has worked hard at protecting the ball to overcome his fumble problems and he is the most experienced player at that position for UNLV. Look for him to be involved in both running the ball and catching it out of the backfield.

Of the 34 incoming players, 11 redshirted last season and eight transferred to UNLV. It should help Sanchez and his staff close the experience gap quicker. The Rebels are also playing an easier schedule than a year ago.

5 SAN JOSE STATE
SPARTANS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@TULSA	
S.10	Portland State	
S.17	Utah	
S.24	@IOWA STATE	
O.1	@NEW MEXICO	31-21
O.8	Hawaii	42-23
O.15	Nevada	34-37
O.22	@SAN DIEGO STATE	7-30
O.29	UNLV	33-27
N.5	@BOISE STATE	23-40
N.19	Air Force	16-37
N.26	@FRESNO STATE	49-23

COACH

Ron Caragher
Fourth year (15-22)
CAREER RECORD: 59-44

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Al Borges (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Ron English (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Beat Georgia State in the Cure Bowl, 27-16)
STADIUM: Spartan Stadium (30,456)
TICKETS: 877-SJSU-TIX
SITE: San Jose
WEBSITE: sjsuspartans.com
TWITTER: @SJSUSpartanFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Kenny Potter (6-2, 208, Sr.)
RB	Thomas Tucker (5-10, 202, Jr.)
RB	Shane Smith (6-2, 247, Sr.)
LT	Nate Velichko (6-7, 302, Jr.)
LG	Jeremiah Kolone (6-3, 301, Jr.)
C	Keoni Taylor (6-3, 303, Jr.)
RG	Chris Gonzalez (6-3, 310, Jr.)
RT	Evan Sarver (6-5, 297, Sr.)
TE	Billy Freeman (6-3, 234, Sr.)
WR	Tim Crawley (5-7, 169, Sr.)
WR	Tyler Winston (6-2, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Nick Oreglia (6-3, 281, Sr.)
DT	Keenan Sykes (6-3, 270, Sr.)
DE	Isaiah Irving (6-3, 241, Sr.)
LB	Christian Tago (6-1, 242, Sr.)
LB	Frank Ginda (6-0, 241, So.)
LB	Mark Amann (6-0, 229, Sr.)
LB	Alex Manigo (6-0, 231, Sr.)
CB	Andre Chachere (6-0, 192, Jr.)
CB	Dakari Monroe (5-11, 181, So.)
FS	Jermaine Kelly (6-1, 192, Jr.)
SS	Maurice McKnight (6-0, 180, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Jake Lanski (5-10, 195, Jr.)
P	Michael Carrizosa (5-10, 226, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

The Spartans were able to go to a bowl game last year despite a losing regular-season record thanks to their success in the classroom. The team's APR was high enough for San Jose State to be selected and it responded by winning the inaugural Cure Bowl over Georgia State.

The Spartans also found their quarterback in Kenny Potter, who outdueled Joe Gray for the starting spot. Potter threw for 1,984 yards, 15 touchdowns and seven interceptions while connecting on 67.4 percent of his passes, the best among Mountain West quarterbacks.

That continuity of Potter having the job can only help. The Spartans have some very good players in key positions. Linebacker Christian Tago is all-conference-caliber, punter Michael Carrizosa was first-team All-Mountain West and tight end Billy Freeman is an inviting target. Though Freeman sat out the spring after having offseason knee surgery, he is expected to be 100 percent for the season opener Sept. 3 at Tulsa.

Coach Ron Caragher shook up his entire defensive coaching staff, bringing in Ron English to be the defensive coordinator after Greg Robinson retired.

There's a lot of work to be done. Finding a replacement for all-purpose back Tyler Ervin is the top challenge after Ervin amassed 2,040 yards in total offense along with 16 touchdowns last season. Running back Thomas Tucker will get a shot at filling Ervin's spot in the offense.

On defense, the Spartans need to replace cornerbacks Jimmy Pruitt and Cleveland Wallace III. And there's a major hole to fill on special teams as SJSU needs to find a kicker after the graduation of Austin Lopez.

San Jose State will be an intriguing team to watch. The changes on defense, if they take hold, could get the Spartans into position to have a winning season. The same logic applies to whether Potter can build on his junior season at QB.

6 HAWAII
RAINBOW WARRIORS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
A.27	California*	
S.3	@MICHIGAN	
S.10	Tennessee-Martin	
S.17	@ARIZONA	
O.1	Nevada	20-30
O.8	@SAN JOSE STATE	23-42
O.15	UNLV	21-41
O.22	@AIR FORCE	7-58
O.29	New Mexico	27-28
N.5	@SAN DIEGO STATE	14-28
N.12	Boise State	0-55
N.19	@FRESNO STATE	14-42
N.26	Massachusetts	

**At Sydney, Australia*

COACH

Nick Rolovich
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Nick Rolovich (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kevin Lempa (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-10
STADIUM: Aloha Stadium (50,000)
TICKETS: 808-944-2697
SITE: Honolulu
WEBSITE: hawaiiathletics.com
TWITTER: @HawaiiFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Ikaika Woolsey (6-1, 215, Sr.)
RB	Paul Harris (5-11, 190, Sr.)
LT	Leo Koloamatangi (6-5, 290, Sr.)
LG	Elijah Tupai (6-4, 300, Jr.)
C	Asotui Eli (6-4, 295, So.)
RG	Dejon Allen (6-3, 290, Jr.)
RT	RJ Hollis (6-4, 295, Sr.)
TE	Metuisela 'Unga (6-5, 240, Jr.)
WR	Devan Stubblefield (6-0, 190, So.)
WR	Marcus Kemp (6-4, 200, Sr.)
WR	Isaiah Bernard (6-1, 190, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Kennedy Tulimasealii (6-1, 285, Sr.)
DT	Kory Rasmussen (6-2, 295, Sr.)
DE	David Manoa (6-3, 240, Jr.)
LB	Jerrol Garcia-Williams (6-2, 235, Sr.)
LB	Jahlani Tavai (6-4, 235, So.)
LB	Russell Williams Jr. (6-1, 230, Jr.)
LB	M. Kema-Kaleiwahea (6-3, 240, Sr.)
CB	Jalen Rogers (6-1, 200, Sr.)
CB	Dejuan Butler (5-11, 180, Sr.)
FS	Daniel Lewis Jr. (5-11, 180, Jr.)
SS	Jamal Mayo (5-11, 185, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Rigoberto Sanchez (6-1, 190, Sr.)
P	Rigoberto Sanchez (6-1, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

After four years of failure, including last year's 3-10 overall record and 0-8 conference slate, Norm Chow was let go and Nevada offensive coordinator Nick Rolovich was hired to take over the program.

Rolovich, who played quarterback at Hawaii 11 years ago, has a lot of work to do to change the culture of losing that has permeated this program since it joined the Mountain West in 2012. The Warriors averaged just 17.6 points per game last season, worst of the 12 MWC teams. Hawaii also allowed 35.6 points a game (11th).

Maybe he can get senior quarterback Ikaika Woolsey to up his game enough to where Hawaii can find the end zone with a little more regularity. Woolsey completed just 49 percent of his passes in 2015 and had more interceptions (6) than touchdowns (5). Those numbers will need to change dramatically.

Senior running back Paul Harris rushed for 1,132 yards and averaged 5.7 yards a carry last year. He figures to get a lot of touches as Rolovich tries to find some balance with his offense. Marcus Kemp and Devan Stubblefield, Hawaii's top two receivers, are back and they combined for 66 catches in 2015. They are better than their numbers show and, if Woolsey improves like the coaching staff believes he will, look for the stats for Kemp and Stubblefield to grow. Hawaii also has virtually all of its offensive line back.

Defensively, end Kennedy Tulimasealii will be the unit's leader. Senior tackle Kory Rasmussen will be a nice complement to Tulimasealii and they'll be asked to not only get some pressure up front on the opposing QB but to stop the run and take some pressure off of linebackers Jahlani Tavai and Jerrol Garcia-Williams. In the secondary, safety Daniel Lewis Jr. and cornerback Jalen Rogers lead a unit that had just three interceptions last year. That number, like so many others, needs to improve in a big way for Hawaii to ascend.

PROJECTED FINISH

NORTH DIVISION

1. **Stanford**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Rose Bowl
2. **Washington**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Alamo Bowl
3. **Oregon**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Holiday Bowl
4. **Washington State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Sun Bowl
5. **California**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Las Vegas Bowl
6. **Oregon State**

SOUTH DIVISION

1. **USC**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cotton Bowl
2. **UCLA**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Foster Farms Bowl
3. **Utah**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cactus Bowl
4. **Arizona State**
5. **Arizona**
6. **Colorado**

Luke Falk, QB, Washington State

Washington State's Mike Leach (left) and Washington's Chris Petersen have their programs headed in the right direction in a loaded Pac-12 North Division.

Pac-12 center of power drifts northward, as Huskies and Cougars make their move

BY BRUCE PASCOE
Arizona Daily Star

Clay Helton's new job title and the usual overflow of talent at USC, plus the continued emergence of UCLA and quarterback Josh Rosen across town, might draw the most attention in the Pac-12 this season. But the truth is that the power has shifted north. And, this time, it really has little to do with Oregon.

The Pac-12 North is a killer because it has four teams all capable of double-digit wins, with Oregon now just a face in that crowd. Washington appears on the verge of a major breakthrough after surpassing expectations with a young roster in Chris Petersen's second season. Washington State has finally matured under Mike Leach. Then, of course, there's Stanford, with do-it-all back Christian McCaffrey poised for another run at the Heisman, while Oregon rusher Royce Freeman will be challenging to outrace his shadow this time.

But as a whole, the Ducks have too many questions to elevate quickly out of the dip they took last season. What's more, they'll have to plug in yet another FCS transfer, Dakota Prukop, to steer them at quarterback after Vernon Adams took over for Marcus Mariota last season.

Cal, having lost quarterback Jared Goff to the NFL, and Oregon State appear a notch below in the North, while the South Division has a strong three-deep with USC, UCLA and Utah. But the Arizona schools have taken a step back and Colorado, while improved, is still working through a multiyear rebuild.

While Helton is the only new head coach in the conference–if you can call him that, since he filled in for the troubled Steve Sarkisian most of last season–the most high-profile changes are with a number of coordinator positions and at quarterback. The Pac-12 loses most of its starting QBs, including the highly accomplished Goff of Cal, Stanford's Kevin Hogan and USC's Cody Kessler. But UCLA returns Rosen after an encouraging season as a true freshman, while the Pacific Northwest is stacked with Jake Browning at Washington and Luke Falk at Washington State, plus high-profile transfers at the Oregon schools. Together, those quarterbacks should wrestle some attention away from the South.

FALK: YOUNG KWAK / AP; LEACH, PETERSEN: ELAINE THOMPSON / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Stability at USC:** Having received a permanent contract late last season after babysitting the end of the Steve Sarkisian Era, Clay Helton appears ready to return the Trojans to the CFP conversation.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Barton Simmons, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	USC	20	2	12	6	272.26
2	UCLA	29	1	10	17	262.35
3	Stanford	26	0	9	14	247.54
4	Arizona State	19	0	4	15	212.09
5	Oregon	18	0	6	12	211.57
6	Washington	17	0	7	10	209.38
7	Utah	20	0	3	24	200.88
8	California	26	0	1	24	193.57
9	Arizona	20	0	2	16	184.36
10	Oregon State	25	0	2	22	181.73
11	Washington State	27	0	0	24	168.93
12	Colorado	16	0	1	15	158.44

ALL-PAC-12

OFFENSE

- QB **Luke Falk,** Jr., Washington State
- RB **Royce Freeman,** Jr., Oregon
- RB **Christian McCaffrey,** Jr., Stanford
- OL **Zach Banner,** Sr., USC
- OL **Conor McDermott,** Jr., UCLA
- OL **Tyrell Crosby,** Jr., Oregon
- OL **Chad Wheeler,** Sr., USC
- OL **J.J. Dielman,** Sr., Utah
- WR **Darren Carrington,** Jr., Oregon
- WR **Gabe Marks,** Sr., Washington State
- WR **JuJu Smith-Schuster,** Jr., USC

DEFENSE

- DL **Eddie Vanderdoes,** Jr., UCLA
- DL **Lowell Lotulelei,** Jr., Utah
- DL **Solomon Thomas,** Jr., Stanford
- DL **Kylie Fitts,** Sr., Utah
- LB **Azeem Victor,** Jr., Washington
- LB **Salamo Fiso,** Sr., Arizona State
- LB **Deon Hollins,** Jr., UCLA
- DB **Budda Baker,** Jr., Washington
- DB **Adoree' Jackson,** Jr., USC
- DB **Sidney Jones,** Jr., Washington
- DB **Marcus Williams,** Jr., Utah

SPECIALISTS

- K **Andy Phillips,** Sr., Utah
- P **Nick Porebski,** Jr., Oregon State

MCCAFFREY: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP

NEWSMAKER

After finishing second in Heisman Trophy voting last season, Stanford's **Christian McCaffrey** racked up a Rose Bowl-record 368 all-purpose yards in Pasadena. And that was just in one game. Now he has a whole season to reintroduce himself to the nation. The only problem this time is his supporting cast will include a new quarterback and a rebuilt offensive line.

OVERRATED

OREGON

The Ducks could return to the nation's elite but questions on the lines and at quarterback mean it's just as likely they'll struggle to crack the top half of the North Division.

UNDERRATED

UTAH

A veteran offensive line and all-around superb defensive talent should keep the Utes in every game. If they can find a quarterback and some other skill players, watch out.

2 Resurgent Huskies: In just two years, Chris Petersen brought Washington back to competiveness. The Huskies could break through with a North Division title this time.

3 A mile-high hurdle: The Buffs won only once in the Pac-12 last season because they couldn't close out games. If that ever changes, Colorado will be bowling.

RATING THE PAC-12

FASTEST RECEIVER
John Ross, Washington
Missed last season with a knee injury—then ran a 4.25 40-yard dash that suggests he's faster than ever.

BEST HANDS
Gabe Marks, WR, Washington State
Toughness ensures he won't drop the ball once he has it, too.

BEST PASSING QB
Luke Falk, Washington State
Talent, work ethic and a scientific approach to the game could make him a dark-horse Heisman candidate again.

BEST RUNNING QB
Anu Solomon, Arizona
A legitimate dual threat who loves to throw on the run.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Myles Gaskin, Washington
Averaged 3.65 yards after contact per rush as a true frosh.

BEST ATHLETE
Adoree' Jackson, CB/WR, USC
Already proven at cornerback, receiver and returner, Jackson took the spring off to make a bid for the Rio Olympics as a long jumper.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Jake Browning, QB, Washington
Held up well as a true freshman, even with a young line that didn't protect him all that much.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
JuJu Smith-Schuster, WR, USC
Size, speed and hands are one thing, but a 138-yard game with a broken hand late last season said something else.

TOP FRESHMAN
N'Keal Harry, WR, Arizona State
Five-star receiving prospect has already made ESPN's "Top 10 Plays"—for shattering a backboard with a dunk in a high school basketball game.

TOP TRANSFER
Dakota Prukop, QB, Oregon
A year after plugging in FCS transfer Vernon Adams at QB, Ducks go down same road with the Montana State transfer.

HARDEST HITTER
Azeem Victor, LB, Washington
The question isn't about his ferociousness and size—it's whether he goes overboard at times.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Luke Falk, QB, Washington State
Arrived as a walk-on after losing a Florida State scholarship offer, and is making the most of it.

BEST INTERVIEW
Gabe Marks, WR, Washington State
A match in on-field philosophy and off-field candor with the coach he calls "Leach," Marks exudes confidence.

BEST COACH
David Shaw, Stanford
Maybe there's some national respect lacking, but not within the Pac-12.

COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Brady Hoke, Oregon
Some fun the former Michigan head coach has: He'll be moving the Ducks to a 4-3 defense without future NFL star end DeForest Buckner.

HOTTEST SEAT
Mike MacIntyre, Colorado
The Buffs have improved in every one of MacIntyre's three seasons, but at some point wins matter, too.

LOUDEST STADIUM
Autzen Stadium, Oregon
The Ducks may have dipped a bit but the combination of rabid fans and acoustics always gives them the home edge.

TOP SCHOLAR
Jeff Lockie, QB, Oregon
Enrolled in Oregon's MBA program instead of taking off as a grad transfer after he was beaten out at QB.

STANFORD
CARDINAL

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

9
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Christian McCaffrey

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Kansas State	
S.17	USC	41-22
S.24	@UCLA	56-35
S.30	@WASHINGTON	31-14
O.8	Washington State	30-28
O.15	@NOTRE DAME	38-36
O.22	Colorado	42-10
O.29	@ARIZONA	55-17
N.5	Oregon State	42-24
N.12	@OREGON	36-38
N.19	@CALIFORNIA	35-22
N.26	Rice	

COACH

David Shaw
Sixth year (54-14)
CAREER RECORD: 54-14

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Mike Bloomgren (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Lance Anderson (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 12-2
(Beat Iowa in the Rose Bowl, 45-16)
STADIUM: Stanford Stadium (50,424)
TICKETS: 800-STANFORD
SITE: Palo Alto, Calif.
WEBSITE: gostanford.com
TWITTER: @StanfordFball

Before the month of October even begins, Stanford will have hosted Kansas State, played both Los Angeles Pac-12 schools and taken a trip to Washington for a game that could ultimately decide the Pac-12 North Division title. Not a single snap can be wasted.

But Stanford knows that feeling already. The Cardinal offense sputtered in a forgettable, uncharacteristic loss at Northwestern to open last season and, while that game was later cited for reinvigorating Stanford the rest of the season, the truth was that it was already too late. The Cardinal lost only one game the rest of the way to reach the Rose Bowl but missed the College Football Playoff. And, while star running back Christian McCaffrey was the *Associated Press* Player of the Year en route to setting an NCAA record for all-purpose yards (3,864), he missed out on the Heisman Trophy, too.

Maybe that changes this year. The Cardinal must find a replacement for highly accomplished quarterback Kevin Hogan, and rebuild both lines to a degree. But with the quality of depth that Stanford keeps acquiring under coach David Shaw, that may not be all that much of a problem.

Without Hogan, the Cardinal can turn to Keller Chryst, who has NFL size and the prep credentials to suggest he could be the latest in the Stanford quarterback tradition. Stanford also has a couple of other highly recruited quarterbacks in Ryan Burns, a senior, and incoming freshman KJ Costello.

The Cardinal lost three starters from a stunningly good offensive line last season but, hey, it's Stanford: Smart offensive linemen gravitate to the place and its high academic standards, and returning senior Johnny Caspers figures to be a leader of the group.

On the defensive line, starters Aziz Shittu, Kevin Anderson and Brennan Scarlett are

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

RB **Christian McCaffrey**

McCaffrey destroyed the competition with his feet in 2015, when he had 1,680 more all-purpose yards (3,864) than the next Pac-12 back, averaging 108 yards more per game (276.0). The Stanford offense loses some key players for 2016, including senior leader and quarterback Kevin Hogan, so the Cardinal will be relying even more on the son of three-time Super Bowl-winning wide receiver Ed McCaffrey. McCaffrey's 2,019 rushing yards was tops in the Pac-12, while his 15 total touchdowns were tied for first on the team. Don't be surprised when McCaffrey gets an invite to New York for the Heisman ceremony and ends up with the trophy.

MCCAFFREY: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP

gone, while tackle Harrison Phillips is coming off a knee injury. But Phillips showed promise in 2014 while Solomon Thomas had 10.5 tackles for loss and was an honorable mention all-league pick.

Stanford's offensive line should be good enough again to help pave another McCaffrey run for the Heisman after he produced on an almost-obscene level last season, collecting 461 all-purpose yards in the Pac-12 Championship Game and a Rose Bowl-record 368 against Iowa. He was also the only FBS player to lead his team in rushing (2,019) and receiving (645) yards. Oh, yeah, and he also threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Hogan in the Pac-12 title game.

As YouTube hero Francis Owusu proved with what might have been the catch of the year against UCLA, Stanford also has a number of big-play receiving threats to keep at least some of the focus off McCaffrey. Against the Bruins, Owusu stunningly pulled in a trick-play bomb from Hogan by grabbing the football behind the back of UCLA defender Jaleel Wadood–then squeezing the ball and Wadood for dear life as they both fell to the end-zone turf. In all, Stanford returns eight of its top 10 receivers, most notably wideout Michael Rector, who trailed only McCaffrey in receiving yards.

Defensively, Stanford's biggest issue might be replacing omnipresent inside linebacker Blake Martinez, who led the Pac-12 in tackles with 141 last season and helped Stanford pull away from USC in the Pac-12 title game when he sacked Cody Kessler and forced the ball loose, which Thomas scooped up and turned into a 42-yard touchdown.

In the secondary, safety Zach Hoffpauir returns after a year in the Arizona Diamondbacks' minor league system, much in the same manner that running back Tyler Gaffney did in 2013 by coming back from a year in the Pirates' system. Hoffpauir, who hit .258 over 17 games in the low minors, was an honorable mention all-league pick in 2014. The rest of a secondary that's still young grew with experience last season, with cornerback Quenton Meeks taking in a pick-six in the Rose Bowl and corner/nickel Alijah Holder getting one against UCLA.

The challenge will be if Stanford can reload and re-establish itself quickly, since the Cardinal's schedule is heavily frontloaded. But Stanford also has possibly the top weapon in college football–McCaffrey–to get them through any tough spots. By the end of the season, the Cardinal could be coasting into the Pac-12 title game again, and maybe much more.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

David Shaw's 2016 recruiting effort should leave the offense in good hands. He got his quarterback of the future in K.J. Costello, the No. 3 pro-style quarterback in the country. Costello will have some big-time targets in Kaden Smith, the No. 2 tight end in the country and Simi Fehoko, one of the top big receivers in the nation. Defensively, Curtis Robinson is as active and athletic as any linebacker in the nation. Andrew Pryts is a hard-hitting Pennsylvania safety that chose Stanford over Penn State. He'll have two physical corners flanking him as both Treyjohn Butler and Obi Eboh play with a safety's toughness on the outside.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Kaden Smith,** TE ★★★★
2. **KJ Costello,** QB ★★★★
3. **Curtis Robinson,** LB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Keller Chryst	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	4	147.3	5-9-0	55.6	59	1	14.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Christian McCaffrey	14	337	2019	6.0	8	144.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Christian McCaffrey	14	45	645	14.3	5	46.1

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Peter Kalambayi	14	32	20	52

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Mike Tyler	12	5.0	43

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Quenton Meeks	3	83	27.7	1

TEAM TRADITION

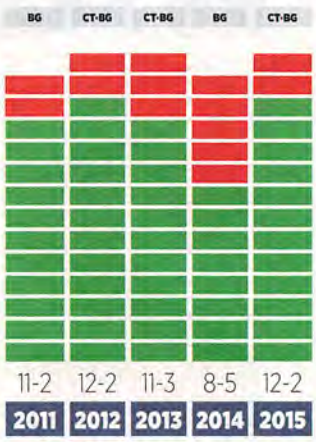
"The Walk," which dates back to the early 1950s, occurs two hours before kickoff as Stanford coaches and players make their way from the Arrillaga Family Sports Center to Stanford Stadium. Fans gather along Sam MacDonald Road for the time-honored tradition, showing support for the Cardinal and enjoying the sounds of the Stanford Marching Band.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	STAN	OPP
SCORING	529	316
Points Per Game	37.8	22.6
FIRST DOWNS	311	267
Rushing	155	106
Passing	129	145
Penalty	27	16
RUSHING YARDAGE	3132	1958
Yards gained rushing	3358	2358
Yards lost rushing	226	400
Rushing Attempts	610	453
Average Per Rush	5.1	4.3
Average Per Game	223.7	139.9
TDs Rushing	33	16
PASSING YARDAGE	2965	3198
Comp-Att-Int	213-318-8	271-473-8
Average Per Pass	9.3	6.8
Average Per Catch	13.9	11.8
Average Per Game	211.8	228.4
TDs Passing	30	19
TOTAL OFFENSE	6097	5156
Total Plays	928	926
Average Per Play	6.6	5.6
Average Per Game	435.5	368.3
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	51-1265	70-1473
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	17-154	11-93
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	8-125	8-101
KICK RETURN AVG.	24.8	21.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.1	8.5
INT RETURN AVG.	15.6	12.6
FUMBLES-LOST	12-5	10-6
PENALTIES-YARDS	78-648	80-742
Average Per Game	46.3	53.0
PUNTS-YARDS	48-1959	66-2797
Average Per Punt	40.8	42.4
Net punt average	37.2	39.1
TIME OF POSS./GAME	34:48	25:12
3RD-DOWN CONV.	91/182	70/193
3rd-Down Pct.	50%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/16	15/24
4th-Down Pct.	81%	62%
SACKS BY-YARDS	34-260	20-104
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	68	36
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-20	23-26
ATTENDANCE	349381	221786
Games/Avg Per Game	7/49912	5/44357
Neutral Site Games		2/76372

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
STANFORD	123	158	132	116	0	529
Opponent	68	69	93	86	0	316

5-YEAR RECORD 54-14



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Keller Chryst** (6-5, 237, Jr.)
	Ryan Burns (6-5, 233, Sr.)
FB	**Daniel Marx** (6-2, 253, Jr.)
	Reagan Williams (6-3, 237, So.)
RB	**Christian McCaffrey** (6-0, 202, Jr.)
	Bryce Love (5-10, 181, So.)
LT	**David Bright** (6-5, 301, Sr.)
	Jack Dreyer (6-8, 306, So.)
LG	**Johnny Caspers** (6-4, 296, Sr.)
	Nick Wilson (6-3, 287, So.)
C	**Jesse Burkett** (6-4, 304, Jr.)
	Brian Chaffin (6-2, 289, So.)
RG	**Brandon Fanaika** (6-3, 318, Jr.)
	Johnny Caspers (6-4, 296, Sr.)
RT	**Casey Tucker** (6-6, 296, Jr.)
	Jack Dreyer (6-8, 306, So.)
TE	**Dalton Schultz** (6-6, 240, Jr.)
	Greg Taboada (6-5, 250, Sr.)
WR	**Michael Rector** (6-1, 185, Sr.)
	Isaiah Brandt-Sims (5-11, 181, Jr.)
WR	**Francis Owusu** (6-3, 223, Sr.)
	Trenton Irwin (6-2, 202, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Solomon Thomas** (6-3, 275, Jr.)
	Jordan Watkins (6-5, 277, Sr.)
DT	**Harrison Phillips** (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Wesley Annan (6-4, 281, So.)
DE	**Luke Kaumatule** (6-7, 294, Sr.)
	Dylan Jackson (6-6, 268, So.)
OLB	**Joey Alfieri** (6-3, 240, Jr.)
	Casey Toohill (6-4, 245, So.)
ILB	**Noor Davis** (6-4, 244, Sr.)
	Mustafa Branch (5-11, 218, So.)
ILB	**Kevin Palma** (6-2, 250, Sr.)
	Bobby Okereke (6-3, 232, Jr.)
OLB	**Peter Kalambayi** (6-3, 245, Sr.)
	Mike Tyler (6-5, 236, Sr.)
CB	**Alijah Holder** (6-2, 185, Jr.)
	Quenton Meeks (6-2, 195, So.)
CB	**Alameen Murphy** (5-11, 195, Jr.)
	Terrence Alexander (5-10, 185, Jr.)
FS	**Dallas Lloyd** (6-3, 213, Sr.)
	Brandon Simmons (6-0, 190, Jr.)
SS	**Zach Hoffpauir** (6-0, 197, Sr.)
	Justin Reid (6-1, 196, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Conrad Ukropina** (6-1, 192, Sr.)
P	**Conrad Ukropina** (6-1, 192, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

WASHINGTON
HUSKIES

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

W

John Ross III

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Rutgers	
S.10	Idaho	
S.17	Portland State	
S.24	@ARIZONA	49-3
S.30	Stanford	14-31
O.8	@OREGON	20-26
O.22	Oregon State	52-7
O.29	@UTAH	23-34
N.5	@CALIFORNIA	24-30
N.12	USC	17-12
N.19	Arizona State	17-27
N.25	@WASH. STATE	45-10

COACH

Chris Petersen
Third year (15-12)
CAREER RECORD: 107-24

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jonathan Smith (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Pete Kwiatkowski (third year)
Jimmy Lake (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Southern Miss in the Heart of Dallas Bowl, 44-31)
STADIUM: Husky Stadium (70,138)
TICKETS: 206-543-2200
SITE: Seattle
WEBSITE: gohuskies.com
TWITTER: @UW_Football

In the ever-understated world of Washington coach Chris Petersen, a 7-6 record might be the perfect subterfuge. As if he could just say "nothing to see here yet," then tell you how hard his kids are working and get back to work, please.

But it only takes a quick look behind that 7-6 record of 2015 to avoid being fooled. The Huskies made big strides in Petersen's second season and are now in position to break out, returning 16 starters from a stunningly young team that put up the Pac-12's best defense and found some much-needed stability at quarterback in Jake Browning.

The Huskies return seven starters from a defense that led the Pac-12 in total defense (351.8 yards per game) and scoring defense (18.8 points per game). Their secondary is particularly strong again, with all-league picks Budda Baker and Sidney Jones, and UW is stacked on the line. The biggest question is among the linebackers, where Cory Littleton and Travis Feeney must be replaced on the outside after they became two of the Pac-12's leaders in sacks and tackles for loss. But end Joe Mathis shifted to outside linebacker to help out, while Tevis Bartlett and Psalm Wooching are candidates to start. On the inside, the Huskies are solid with Azeem Victor, Ben Burr-Kirvin and Keishawn Bierria returning; all played big roles last season.

Of all the areas of young talent that developed quickly to a high level, Washington's secondary is the best example. The Huskies were second in pass-efficiency defense (115.9) and gave up only 11 touchdowns in the pass-happy Pac-12. Jones led the league in passes defended (1.08 per game), and he and Baker were named first-team all-conference players as sophomores. The only loss in the secondary was safety Brian Clay, with sophomore JoJo McIntosh

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

WR **John Ross III**

After missing all of 2015 with a knee injury, the supremely versatile Ross III returns for the Huskies as their most dangerous downfield threat after running a 4.25 40-yard dash in Washington's third annual Husky Combine on March 6. The fourth-year junior obviously hasn't lost a step; in fact, he must have gained some in the offseason, as his recorded 40 time in 2014 was 4.29. In 2014, the 5-11, 196-pound junior returned two kickoffs for touchdowns and scored from scrimmage on plays of 91, 86, 75, 55 and 20 yards before switching to cornerback for the last five games. The explosive skillset and numbers are there, but Ross will have to prove it again after a year out of competition.

ROSS: EUGENE TANNER / AP

appearing the most likely to replace him.

Most of Washington's concerns are on offense, where Browning needs more receiving help and protection from the line. Browning emerged as a true freshman last season, somewhat surprisingly beating out then-junior Jeff Lindquist for the job, but struggled at times as a deep passer. Yet he improved as the season went on and should be able to grow off of that experience this season. It also helps that he can hand off to another young standout in tailback Myles Gaskin, who averaged 100.2 yards per game rushing last season, also as a true freshman. Gaskin is short but strong, a dependable rusher in short-yardage situations, and he'll be needed to carry a heavy load again.

The Huskies' offensive line also should gain from a year of experience, provided it can stay reasonably healthy. Tall 300-pounders Trey Adams and Kaleb McGary, expected to be anchors of the line, suffered spring injuries that gave some pause to a unit that appeared finally ready to benefit from experience and size. Washington has had to plug in young players out of necessity in recent seasons.

More than anything, though, the Huskies lacked a dependable passing attack, finishing just ninth in the Pac-12 in passing offense (239.2 yards per game). That led to Petersen's firing of receivers coach Brent Pease after last season, and eventual promotion of Petersen's former Boise State quarterback, Bush Hamdan, to the position. Hamdan gets an automatic boost immediately because speedster John Ross III returns from a knee injury that kept him out all of last season. When Ross ran a 4.25 40-yard dash before spring drills began, you could sense a sigh of relief since his game is so much about simply beating everyone downfield.

But Washington did lose one of its top receivers in Jaydon Mickens, who wound up second on the school's all-time receptions list with 203. Having also lost Joshua Perkins at tight end, the Huskies made the unusual move of shifting both former QB Lindquist and defensive end Will Dissly to the position, where they might be able to make more of an impact.

The rest of Washington's challenge this season is more intangible. The Huskies don't have the wide-open position battles they faced in Petersen's first year, but the success they established last season also means they will be taken seriously. Opponents know, as much as Husky fans do, that something has been changing in Seattle for the better. That 7-6 record may even turn into a Pac-12 North title before long.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

Washington had a small class in 2016 with only 18 signees, but the Huskies made it count by adding a ton of speed and athleticism. Sean McGrew was one of the fastest prep athletes in all of California and he'll add immediate big-play ability to the backfield. Arizonan Byron Murphy shunned the in-state powers to take his big-play ability—on either side of the ball—to Washington. Isaiah Gilchrist is another track speedster who continues the Huskies' pipeline to local power Bellevue High. Even on defense, Washington picked up speed. There may not be two more athletic linebackers in the country than Camilo Eifler and Brandon Wellington.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Byron Murphy,** CB ★★★★
2. **Camilo Eifler,** LB ★★★★
3. **Brandon Wellington,** LB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jake Browning

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	139.7	233-368-10	63.3	2955	16	246.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Myles Gaskin	13	227	1302	5.7	14	100.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Dante Pettis	13	30	414	13.8	1	31.8

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Azeem Victor	13	59	36	95

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Elijah Qualls	10	4.5	25

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Sidney Jones	4	125	31.2	1

TEAM TRADITION

Husky Stadium is one of the few venues around easily accessible by boat. Therefore, a popular tradition for Washington fans is "sailgating." Providing one of the most scenic tailgating experiences, fans can drop anchor in Lake Washington or moor their boats on the docks of Husky Harbor, a short walk from the stadium. Fans can also take in the skyline of Seattle as well as Mount Rainier in the Cascade Mountains and the Olympic Mountain Range.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	WASH	OPP
SCORING	398	244
Points Per Game	30.6	18.8
FIRST DOWNS	261	248
Rushing	108	91
Passing	140	134
Penalty	13	23
RUSHING YARDAGE	2130	1629
Yards gained rushing	2528	1998
Yards lost rushing	398	369
Rushing Attempts	477	495
Average Per Rush	4.5	3.3
Average Per Game	163.8	125.3
TDs Rushing	27	15
PASSING YARDAGE	3110	2945
Comp-Att-Int	245-396-11	254-438-15
Average Per Pass	7.9	6.7
Average Per Catch	12.7	11.6
Average Per Game	239.2	226.5
TDs Passing	17	11
TOTAL OFFENSE	5240	4574
Total Plays	873	933
Average Per Play	6.0	4.9
Average Per Game	403.1	351.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	35-708	49-1079
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	23-368	12-80
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-358	11-160
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.2	22.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	16.0	6.7
INT RETURN AVG.	23.9	14.5
FUMBLES-LOST	18-11	21-12
PENALTIES-YARDS	71-651	73-622
Average Per Game	50.1	47.8
PUNTS-YARDS	57-2390	73-2952
Average Per Punt	41.9	40.4
Net punt average	37.4	34.8
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:00	30:00
3RD-DOWN CONV.	64/169	75/204
3rd-Down Pct.	38%	37%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/19	12/23
4th-Down Pct.	42%	52%
SACKS BY-YARDS	34-208	33-219
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	50	28
FG-ATTEMPTS	16-21	17-24
ATTENDANCE	433432	236968
Games/Avg Per Game	7/61919	5/47394
Neutral Site Games		1/20229

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
WASHINGTON	79	113	135	71	0	398
Opponent	38	97	56	53	0	244

5-YEAR RECORD 38-28

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Jake Browning** (6-2, 205, So.)
	K.J. Carta-Samuels (6-2, 219, So.)
RB	**Myles Gaskin** (5-10, 193, So.)
	Lavon Coleman (5-11, 220, Jr.)
LT	**Trey Adams** (6-8, 306, So.)
	Matt James (6-5, 291, So.)
LG	**Jake Eldrenkamp** (6-5, 284, Sr.)
	Michael Kneip (6-5, 284, Sr.)
C	**Coleman Shelton** (6-4, 292, Jr.)
	Shane Brostek (6-4, 285, Sr.)
RG	**Jesse Sosebee** (6-5, 314, So.)
	Henry Roberts (6-6, 290, Fr.)
RT	**Kaleb McGary** (6-7, 300, So.)
	Andrew Kirkland (6-4, 313, Jr.)
TE	**Darrell Daniels** (6-4, 237, Sr.)
	Jeff Lindquist (6-3, 244, Sr.)
WR	**Chico McClatcher** (5-7, 176, So.)
	Andre Baccellia (5-10, 166, Fr.)
WR	**Dante Pettis** (6-1, 187, Jr.)
	Isaiah Renfro (6-1, 206, So.)
WR	**John Ross III** (5-11, 196, Jr.)
	Brayden Lenius (6-5, 228, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Benning Potoa'e** (6-3, 271, Fr.)
	Levi Onwuzurike (6-4, 262, Fr.)
DT	**Greg Gaines** (6-2, 318, So.)
	Jaylen Johnson (6-3, 285, So.)
NT	**Elijah Qualls** (6-1, 321, Jr.)
	Vita Vea (6-5, 329, So.)
OLB	**Joe Mathis** (6-2, 256, Sr.)
	Tevis Bartlett (6-2, 229, So.)
MLB	**Azeem Victor** (6-3, 227, Jr.)
	Ben Burr-Kirvin (6-0, 215, So.)
WLB	**Keishawn Bierria** (6-1, 226, Jr.)
	Sean Constantine (6-2, 232, Jr.)
OLB	**Psalm Wooching** (6-4, 230, Sr.)
	Connor O'Brien (6-3, 240, Jr.)
CB	**Kevin King** (6-3, 190, Sr.)
	Darren Gardenhire (5-11, 187, Jr.)
CB	**Sidney Jones** (6-0, 180, Jr.)
	Jordan Miller (6-1, 176, So.)
FS	**Budda Baker** (5-10, 184, Jr.)
	Trevor Walker (5-11, 190, Jr.)
SS	**JoJo McIntosh** (6-1, 208, So.)
	Ezekiel Turner (6-2, 210, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Cameron Van Winkle** (5-10, 189, Sr.)
P	**Tristan Vizcaino** (6-2, 201, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

OREGON
DUCKS

3
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

0

21
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

RB **Royce Freeman**

Maybe it was Oregon's fault for setting the bar so high, or perhaps you can just blame Marcus Mariota. Whatever the case, the Ducks slipped under their lofty standard last season and are in danger of doing so again.

A team that won four Pac-12 titles and appeared in two national championships over the past seven seasons produced "just" nine wins. The Ducks also nearly coughed up a 31-7 halftime lead over Oregon State in their regular-season finale and fell completely apart in the Alamo Bowl against TCU, losing in overtime after building up a 31-0 halftime lead. Those efforts screamed of slippage.

Part of that problem, of course, was losing the 2014 Heisman Trophy winner in Mariota. But the Ducks did get some solid performances from FCS transfer Vernon Adams in Mariota's place last season—when Adams was healthy—and they are expected to follow the same formula this year with Dakota Prukop, an FCS transfer from Montana State.

The Ducks also have a rushing star in Royce Freeman, who broke the school record for rushing yards with 1,836 last season. But there are significant openings to be filled on the offensive line and the receiving corps is shallow enough that two-way threat Charles Nelson may have to play primarily on the offensive side after standing out as a safety last season.

If so, that means Oregon's secondary will now rely more on junior free safety Tyree Robinson and a number of defensive backs who gained experience last season.

Up front, the Ducks are moving to a 4-3 defense under new coordinator Brady Hoke (the former Michigan head coach) at the same time that they will be replacing seven defensive starters, including end DeForest Buckner, the Pac-12's Defensive Player of the Year in 2015. Oregon is trying to flesh out the four-man line by dropping down linebackers Torrodney Prevot and Justin Hollins to end. One of the three starting linebackers will likely be junior A.J. Hotchkins, a lightly recruited player out of Portland who originally showed up as a freshman at Wyoming and then wound up becoming one of the nation's top junior-college linebackers at Riverside (Calif.) City College.

Unlike Adams, who arrived in August, Prukop got a head start on the Ducks' offense by participating in spring practices. But even if Prukop proves as capable or better than Adams—and even if Freeman gets in the Heisman hunt—the Ducks still have too many questions on both sides of the line and elsewhere to suggest things get much better.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	UC Davis	
S.10	Virginia	
S.17	@NEBRASKA	
S.24	Colorado	41-24
O.1	@WASH. STATE	38-45
O.8	Washington	26-20
O.21	@CALIFORNIA	44-28
O.29	Arizona State	61-55
N.5	@USC	48-28
N.12	Stanford	38-36
N.19	@UTAH	20-62
N.26	@OREGON STATE	52-42

COACH

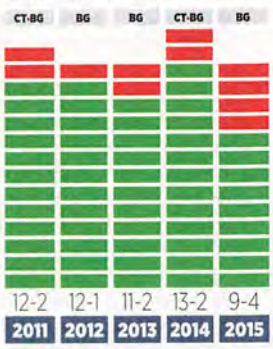
Mark Helfrich
Fourth year (33-8)
CAREER RECORD: 33-8

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Matt Lubick (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Brady Hoke (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to TCU in the Alamo Bowl, 47-41)
STADIUM: Autzen Stadium (54,000)
TICKETS: 800-WEB-FOOT
SITE: Eugene, Ore.
WEBSITE: goducks.com
TWITTER: @WinTheDay

5-YEAR RECORD
57-11



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Dakota Prukop (6-2, 200, Sr.)
RB	Royce Freeman (5-11, 230, Jr.)
LT	Jake Pisarcik (6-2, 300, Jr.)
LG	Evan Voeller (6-5, 295, Jr.)
C	Jake Hanson (6-5, 288, Fr.)
RG	Tyrell Crosby (6-5, 310, Jr.)
RT	Cameron Hunt (6-4, 295, Sr.)
TE	Pharaoh Brown (6-6, 250, Sr.)
WR	Dwayne Stanford (6-5, 205, Sr.)
WR	Darren Carrington (6-2, 195, Jr.)
WR	Charles Nelson (5-8, 170, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Henry Mondeaux (6-5, 280, Jr.)
NT	Austin Maloata (6-1, 305, Jr.)
DT	Canton Kaumatule (6-7, 295, So.)
DE	Torrodney Prevot (6-3, 225, Sr.)
ILB	A.J. Hotchkins (5-11, 230, Jr.)
ILB	Johnny Ragin III (6-3, 225, Sr.)
OLB	Cody Carriger (6-6, 240, Sr.)
CB	Chris Seisay (6-1, 190, Jr.)
CB	Arrion Springs (5-11, 205, Jr.)
FS	Tyree Robinson (6-4, 205, Jr.)
SS	Juwaan Williams (6-0, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Aidan Schneider (6-4, 235, Jr.)
P	Ian Wheeler (6-0, 205, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

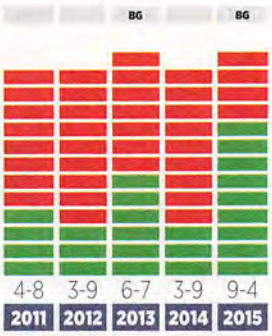
1. **Dillon Mitchell,** WR ★★★★
2. **Tristen Wallace,** ATH ★★★★
3. **Bryson Young,** DE ★★★★

Oregon looked to break a slump in finding prep quarterback talent by signing two in the 2016 class. Terry Wilson and Justin Herbert both bring athleticism and upside to the position. The Ducks also brought in a one-time Ohio State quarterback commit as an athlete in 6-4, 235-pound Tristen Wallace of Texas.

FREEMAN: ROSS D. FRANKLIN / AP

WASHINGTON STATE
COUGARS

5-YEAR RECORD
25-37



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Luke Falk (6-4, 214, Jr.)
RB	Gerard Wicks (6-0, 226, Jr.)
HB	Robert Lewis (5-9, 162, Jr.)
LT	Andre Dillard (6-5, 290, So.)
LG	Cody O'Connell (6-8, 351, Jr.)
C	Riley Sorenson (6-4, 327, Sr.)
RG	Eduardo Middleton (6-5, 323, Sr.)
RT	Cole Madison (6-5, 305, Jr.)
WR	Gabe Marks (6-0, 188, Sr.)
WR	Tavares Martin (6-1, 182, So.)
WR	River Cracraft (6-0, 203, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Hercules Mata'afa (6-2, 245, So.)
NT	Robert Barber (6-3, 309, Sr.)
DT	Daniel Ekuale (6-3, 296, Jr.)
DE/LB	Dylan Hanser (6-4, 230, Jr.)
MLB	Peyton Pelluer (6-0, 229, Jr.)
WLB	Frankie Luvu (6-2, 239, Jr.)
CB	Marcellus Pippins (5-10, 170, Jr.)
CB	Darrien Molton (5-10, 173, So.)
FS	Shalom Luani (6-0, 198, Sr.)
SS	Charleston White (6-0, 195, Jr.)
NB	Parker Henry (5-11, 203, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Zach Charme (6-1, 188, So.)
P	Matt Abramo (6-2, 184, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1. **Isaiah Johnson,** WR ★★★
2. **Frederick Mauigoa,** OG ★★★
3. **Chima Onyeukwu,** LB ★★★

No less than five wideouts will be heading to Pullman to restock the Washington State offense, but there's reason to be excited about the offensive line as well, led by Frederick Mauigoa of American Samoa. Romello Harris is another name to watch as a speedy threat out of the backfield.

QB **Luke Falk**

FALK: YOUNG KWAK / AP

After four years under coach Mike Leach, some of them predictably rocky, the Cougars have finally arrived. Washington State snapped a streak of 11 straight non-winning seasons in 2015, earning Leach co-Pac-12 Coach of the Year, and after beating Miami in a snowy Sun Bowl game, the Cougars finished with nine wins for the first time since 2003.

They could be even better this year. One big reason is the emergence of quarterback Luke Falk as a full-time starter last season. Falk averaged 380.1 passing yards per game in WSU's "Air Raid" offense while being named first-team All-Pac-12. His biggest issue was working through concussion protocol after a troubling pair of late-season incidents, missing the Apple Cup rivalry game against Washington, but he returned to become the MVP of the Sun Bowl by throwing for 295 yards with no interceptions.

This year, the Cougs return a mostly accomplished, veteran line that should protect Falk, and he'll have possibly the conference's best group of wide receivers to throw to. Gabe Marks opted to hold off the NFL for another year, while senior River Cracraft returns from injuries that cost him three games late last season and speedster Tavares Martin has showed promise as a receiver and kick returner. At running back, the only problem is figuring out who gets the touches: Wazzu has its top three rushers returning, led by Gerard Wicks, in addition to well-regarded redshirt freshman James Williams.

There are many more questions defensively. While WSU made considerable progress under first-year defensive coordinator Alex Grinch last year, especially on the line, the Cougars were still mediocre in most defensive categories, giving up an average of 193.3 rushing yards (4.9 per carry) and allowing opponents to convert third downs at a 44.5-percent rate. The Cougars lost two of the Pac-12's top-10 leaders in tackles for loss, Destiny Vaeao and Darryl Paulo, and will rely more on Hercules Mata'afa for playmaking. The linebacking unit lost two starters around the returning starter in the middle, Peyton Pelluer, but the defensive secondary returns mostly intact.

A Southern Californian who says he enjoys life in small-town Pullman, Marks says he came back to WSU for his senior season to help lead the Cougars to a Pac-12 championship and Rose Bowl. That kind of statement would have seemed odd when Marks and Leach arrived together at WSU in 2012. But not so much anymore.

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Eastern Washington	
S.10	@BOISE STATE	
S.17	Idaho	
O.1	Oregon	45-38
O.8	@STANFORD	28-30
O.15	UCLA	31-27
O.22	@ARIZONA STATE	38-24
O.29	@OREGON STATE	52-31
N.5	Arizona	45-42
N.12	California	28-34
N.19	@COLORADO	27-3
N.25	Washington	10-45

COACH

Mike Leach
Fifth year (21-29)
CAREER RECORD: 105-72

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Leach (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Alex Grinch (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Miami (Fla.) in the Sun Bowl, 20-14)
STADIUM: Martin Stadium (32,952)
TICKETS: 800-GO-COUGS
SITE: Pullman, Wash.
WEBSITE: wsucougars.com
TWITTER: @wsucougfb

CALIFORNIA
GOLDEN BEARS

5

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB **Tre Watson**

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
A.27	Hawaii*	
S.10	@SAN DIEGO STATE	35-7
S.17	Texas	45-44
S.24	@ARIZONA STATE	48-46
O.1	Utah	24-30
O.8	@OREGON STATE	54-24
O.21	Oregon	28-44
O.27	@USC	21-27
N.5	Washington	30-24
N.12	@WASH. STATE	34-28
N.19	Stanford	22-35
N.26	UCLA	24-40

**At Sydney, Australia*

COACH

Sonny Dykes
Fourth year (14-23)
CAREER RECORD: 36-38

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jake Spavital (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Art Kaufman (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Air Force in the Armed Forces Bowl, 55-36)
STADIUM: California Memorial Stadium (62,467)
TICKETS: 800-GO-BEARS
SITE: Berkeley, Calif.
WEBSITE: calbears.com
TWITTER: @CalFootball

When head coach Sonny Dykes hired former Texas A&M offensive coordinator Jake Spavital for the same job at Cal, the "Bear Raid" philosophy was safe. Spavital worked with Johnny Manziel at A&M and has spent time under a number of well-regarded coaches. He's already well-versed in uptempo offenses at age 31.

Instead, it's the personnel that's changing at Cal. The Bears lost one of their best quarterbacks of all time in Jared Goff and his top six receivers. A full three-quarters of Goff's passing targets are gone, including all-conference pick Kenny Lawler—though Cal recruited receivers heavily in recent years and will still likely play at least eight of them. Former Idaho State player Chad Hansen, who totaled 249 receiving yards last season, should take on more work this year, and the Bears also have Tennessee transfer Vic Wharton III eligible. Among the freshman newcomers expected to make an immediate impact are Melquise Stovall, a U.S. Army All-American who enrolled early and began impressing in spring drills, and 6-2 Mississippi product Jordan Duncan.

Running back will again be handled largely by committee, though Tre Watson may earn the starting job after finishing last season strongly; other options include 6-1, 235-pound power back Vic Enwere.

Goff's backup last season, Chase Forrest, appeared capable of winning the starting quarterback job while playing a limited role, but redshirt freshman Ross Bowers had an impressive spring to put himself firmly in the mix. Cal also moved junior Luke Rubenzer back from safety to compete for the job.

The good news for Cal is that all this offensive transition should be protected somewhat by a line that returns most of its key contributors, including left guard Chris Borrayo.

The Bears' defense was undoubtedly a weak spot last season, though there is more depth and experience this time to suggest improvement. Cal was 11th in Pac-12 rushing defense and red-zone defense, saddled partly by inexperience. Dykes is hoping DeVante Wilson can increase pressure from defensive end and that the Bears' secondary, which is particularly deep at safety, continues the considerable improvement it made last season. But the linebacking corps suffered a wave of losses that could leave Cal vulnerable again.

Cal can get better in many areas, but replacing a star quarterback while playing a North Division schedule with a mediocre defense means upward mobility is unlikely. Any improvement on last season's 4-5 league record and fourth-place finish would be a surprise.

5-YEAR RECORD
24-38

WIN **LOSS**
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Chase Forrest** (6-2, 205, So.)
RB	**Tre Watson** (5-10, 190, Jr.)
LT	**Aaron Cochran** (6-8, 350, Jr.)
LG	**Chris Borrayo** (6-3, 310, Sr.)
C	**Dominic Granado** (6-4, 290, Sr.)
RG	**Dwayne Wallace** (6-5, 340, Jr.)
RT	**Steven Moore** (6-6, 305, Sr.)
WR	**Chad Hansen** (6-2, 195, Jr.)
WR	**Melquise Stovall** (5-9, 185, Fr.)
WR	**Greyson Bankhead** (5-10, 160, Fr.)
WR	**Vic Wharton III** (6-0, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**DeVante Wilson** (6-5, 265, Sr.)
DT	**Marcus Manley** (6-3, 305, Sr.)
DT	**Rusty Becker** (6-4, 270, Jr.)
DE	**Cameron Saffle** (6-3, 245, So.)
LB	**Devante Downs** (6-3, 240, Jr.)
LB	**Raymond Davison** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
LB	**Hamilton Anoa'i** (6-2, 245 Jr.)
CB	**Darius Allensworth** (6-0, 190, Jr.)
CB	**Antoine Albert** (6-1, 185, Sr.)
FS	**Griffin Piatt** (6-3, 200, Sr.)
SS	**Damariay Drew** (5-11, 200, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Dylan Klumph** (6-3, 230, So.)
P	**Matt Anderson** (6-0, 190, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Melquise Stovall,** RB/WR ★★★★
2. **Max Gilliam,** QB ★★★
3. **Jordan Duncan,** WR ★★★

Coach Sonny Dykes tapped into some of his Southern roots to land major steals out of Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas. But the quarterbacks he brought in from close by make the class. Max Gilliam was as pure of a prep passer as there was on the West Coast in 2016 and Victor Viramontes brings a rare quarterback/linebacker combination.

WATSON: JEFF CHIU / AP

OREGON STATE
BEAVERS

5-YEAR RECORD
26-36

WIN **LOSS**
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

WR **Victor Bolden**

6
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Darell Garretson** (6-0, 208, Jr.)
RB	**Ryan Nall** (6-2, 235, So.)
LT	**Dustin Stanton** (6-6, 304, Sr.)
LG	**Fred Lauina** (6-4, 310, Jr.)
C	**Brayden Kearsley** (6-4, 305, Jr.)
RG	**Gavin Andrews** (6-6, 332, Sr.)
RT	**Sean Harlow** (6-4, 298, Sr.)
TE	**Noah Togiai** (6-4, 237, So.)
WR	**Jordan Villamin** (6-5, 232, Jr.)
WR	**Victor Bolden** (5-9, 181, Sr.)
WR	**Hunter Jarmon** (5-11, 193, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Baker Pritchard** (6-3, 272, Jr.)
NT	**Sumner Houston** (6-2, 290, So.)
DE	**Kalani Vakameilalo** (6-3, 314, So.)
OLB	**Titus Failauga** (6-3, 248, Jr.)
ILB	**Caleb Saulo** (6-1, 236, Sr.)
ILB	**Manase Hungalu** (6-1, 237, Jr.)
OLB	**Jonathan Willis** (6-1, 228, So.)
CB	**Treston Decoud** (6-3, 210, Sr.)
CB	**Kendall Hill** (6-2, 204, Sr.)
S	**Devin Chappell** (6-2, 204, Sr.)
S	**Brandon Arnold** (5-11, 202, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Garrett Owens** (5-9, 181, Jr.)
P	**Nick Porebski** (5-10, 198, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING
1. **Christian Wallace,** S ★★★★
2. **Isaac Garcia,** DE ★★★
3. **Mason Moran,** QB ★★★

While Oregon State's offense needs a jolt following the 2015 season, it's on defense where coach Gary Andersen is bringing in most of his playmakers. Christian Wallace is a big safety out of Texas, Hamilcar Rashed is a long-armed edge rusher from Arizona and Phillip Napoleon was one of the top defenders in junior college last season.

BOLDEN: TONY DING / AP

If viewed solely within the final two quarters of play, Oregon State's first season under Gary Andersen doesn't look so bad. The Beavers outscored rival Oregon 35-21 after halftime at Autzen Stadium, showing heart at a time when they could have just packed up their gear and headed back up the Willamette Valley for good.

The rest of the season was hardly as encouraging. In fact, it couldn't have been much worse. The Beavers didn't win a single Pac-12 game, losing even to Colorado at home, and finished dead last in a number of conference statistical categories, including scoring (19.0 points per game), total offense (336.8 yards per game), rushing defense (225.5), passing efficiency (96.9) and passing-efficiency defense (156.8). It was enough to make former coach Mike Riley appear remarkably clairvoyant when he took off for Nebraska, leaving behind a mediocre roster that became worse when it struggled to adjust to Andersen's spread offense.

While the Beavers are deeper and more prepared this time–thanks, in part, to seven junior-college transfers–more growing pains are inevitable.

The Beavers struggled to find a quarterback last season, with initial starter Seth Collins as inconsistent as he was electric. Then it was Nick Mitchell, who started four games, and Marcus McMaryion starting against Oregon. Collins wound up scoring three touchdowns as a running back against the Ducks, but contemplated transferring to Northern Illinois before rejoining the Beavers as a receiver in April. Mitchell wound up transferring out, and OSU's hopes now are on Utah State transfer Darell Garretson as a starter, with McMaryion as backup. Garretson is a strong pocket passer who isn't exceptionally quick or big but ran a spread offense under then-Utah State offensive coordinator Kevin McGiven, who is now OSU's co-offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach.

The Beavers have a number of capable rushers led by Ryan Nall, while the offensive line will get guard Gavin Andrews and tackle Sean Harlow back from foot injuries and BYU transfer Brayden Kearsley will take over at center. Garretson also has a few proven receiving targets to work with, including leading receiver Jordan Villamin, while tight end Caleb Smith is back after redshirting because of a lengthy illness last season.

The toughest job probably belongs to new defensive coordinator Kevin Clune, who will take over a unit that struggled across the board. But Clune has experience running the 3-4 that OSU has adopted under Andersen, and his Aggies gave up just 332.5 total yards per game last season. Clune inherits seven returning starters, though OSU's leading tackler, linebacker Rommel Mageo, left for Ole Miss as a grad transfer.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	@MINNESOTA	
S.17	Idaho State	
S.24	Boise State	
O.1	@COLORADO	13-17
O.8	California	24-54
O.15	Utah	12-27
O.22	@WASHINGTON	7-52
O.29	Washington State	31-52
N.5	@STANFORD	24-42
N.12	@UCLA	0-41
N.19	Arizona	7-44
N.26	Oregon	42-52

COACH
Gary Andersen
Second year (2-10)
CAREER RECORD: 51-48

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kevin McGiven (first year)
T.J. Woods (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kevin Clune (first year)

FAST FACTS
2015 RECORD: 2-10
STADIUM: Reser Stadium (45,674)
TICKETS: 1-800-GO-BEAVS
SITE: Corvallis, Ore.
WEBSITE: osubeavers.com
TWITTER: @OSUBeaversFB

USC
TROJANS

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SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

1
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

JuJu Smith-Schuster

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Alabama*	
S.10	Utah State	
S.17	@STANFORD	22-41
S.23	@UTAH	42-24
O.1	Arizona State	42-14
O.8	Colorado	27-24
O.15	@ARIZONA	38-30
O.27	California	27-21
N.5	Oregon	28-48
N.12	@WASHINGTON	12-17
N.19	@UCLA	40-21
N.26	Notre Dame	31-41

At Arlington, TX

COACH

Clay Helton
Second year (6-4)
CAREER RECORD: 6-4

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tee Martin (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Clancy Pendergast (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-6
(Lost to Wisconsin in the Holiday Bowl, 23-21)
STADIUM: Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum (93,607)
TICKETS: 213-740-GOSC
SITE: Los Angeles
WEBSITE: usctrojans.com
TWITTER: @USC_Athletics

When he was finally introduced as the Trojans' permanent head coach last November, Clay Helton was asked about a schedule that lists Alabama first, includes North Division powers Oregon and Stanford, then ends with Notre Dame.

"How fun is that gonna be?" Helton said. "Are you kidding me? At USC, we want to compete against the best. To be the best you've gotta compete against the best."

The response was pure Helton–some down-home charm belying an intense competitiveness. But it also spoke to perspective. It would be tough, but it was only football. Just football.

Six previous years on the Trojans' staff told Helton it isn't always about just football at USC. Helton worked his way through the tumultuous Lane Kiffin Era, in which the pressure from 2012 struggles ended with a September 2013 firing at the Los Angeles airport. Helton then hung in as a quarterbacks coach and offensive coordinator early last season after Steve Sarkisian appeared intoxicated at an August USC booster event, then took over on an interim basis in mid-October when Sarkisian was fired after seeking treatment for alcoholism.

Helton was given the job permanently after posting a 5-2 record over the rest of the regular season, then dropped defensive coordinator Justin Wilcox and three other coaches while later bringing back Clancy Pendergast to become the Trojans' defensive coordinator for the second time and giving offensive coordinator Tee Martin play-calling duties.

The biggest issue the new staff will have is replacing quarterback Cody Kessler, but they have promising candidates in Max Browne and Sam Darnold. Browne has paid some serious dues, having redshirted and played behind Kessler for three seasons. But Darnold was impressive in practice as a redshirt last season and put considerable pressure on Kessler with his play during the spring. They both have NFL size, but while Darnold is a quicker, dual-threat

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

WR **JuJu Smith-Schuster**

Tough to say, easy to watch, JuJu Smith-Schuster is much more than just a tongue twister. The 6-2, 215-pound junior led the league in receiving yards (1,454) last season while averaging 103.9 per game and finishing second in receptions (89). The first-team All-Pac-12 choice is yet another receiver from a long line of explosive playmakers in program history and that talent will need to be on full display in 2016 as the Trojans replace some key components, most notably graduated QB Cody Kessler.

SMITH-SCHUSTER: MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ / AP

quarterback, Browne is more of a pro-style passer.

Whoever wins the job gets a lot of toys to play with. The Trojans have explosive running backs Justin Davis and Ronald Jones II, big-play receiving threat JuJu Smith-Schuster and a deep, veteran offensive line. Nine starters return overall.

There should be enough for Martin to make the Trojans' offense more versatile and unpredictable after Smith-Schuster pulled down more than double the pass receptions of any other USC receiver last season. Receivers Darreus Rogers and Steven Mitchell Jr. have also proven capable of more while "four-way" threat Adoree' Jackson (offense, defense, returning ... and track) will spill over to that side of the field again.

Then again, just running the ball is tempting when you've got guys like Davis and Jones II, who broke Charles White's USC freshman rushing record with 987 yards.

Southern Cal's offensive line is stacked with all late-season starters returning–initial starting center Max Tuerk was lost to injury after five games last year–though the defensive line will be a challenge. The Trojans were obliterated on the line through senior attrition, Su'a Cravens' early departure for the NFL and a spring decision against Scott Felix's appeal to have his senior season restored after he was determined to have used a banned substance last season.

Returning defensive coordinator Clancy Pendergast will run a 5-2 front with three tackles plus outside linebackers moving up as ends. Pendergast ran the scheme, which can easily morph into a 3-4 and 4-3, in 2013 when USC had a defense ranked in the top 20 nationally. He spent last season with the San Francisco 49ers as a linebackers coach before Helton brought him back to USC.

While Jackson didn't play in spring ball because he was trying to parlay his Pac-12 long jump title into an Olympic team berth, he is unlikely to appear far behind. Jackson was an all-league defensive back last season and will be expected to also pitch in at receiver and returner. Experience surrounds him, with cornerback Iman Marshall opposite Jackson, plus returning safety starters Chris Hawkins and John Plattenburg.

So the talent isn't the question, as it rarely is at USC. As much as anything, it's about whether Helton and his revamped staff can create order and cohesion, putting the distractions of the past behind the program. It's about whether the Trojans can just play football for a change. Because USC can be pretty good at that.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

A fleet of diverse pass receivers and a flurry of activity on National Signing Day gave USC the best class in the Pac-12. Two five-star prospects are included in the haul. One, Oluwole Betiku, had 17 sacks in his second year ever playing football; the other, Jack Jones, is one of the most competitive lockdown cornerbacks in the country. On offense, ace recruiter Tee Martin reeled in the best receiving class in the country. Michael Pittman and Josh Imatorbhebhe have the size to be immediate contributors out of that group. The Trojans also pulled a Signing Day flip from former Oregon commit Vavae Malepeai, a touted running back.

TOP SIGNEES

1 **Oluwole Betiku,** DE ★★★★★
2 **Jack Jones,** CB ★★★★★
3 **Tyler Vaughns,** WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Jalen Greene

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
14	424.2	3-4-0	75.0	127	1	9.1

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Ronald Jones II	14	153	987	6.5	8	70.5

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
JuJu Smith-Schuster	14	89	1454	16.3	10	103.9

TACKLES

	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Cameron Smith	10	45	33	78

SACKS

	GP	No.	Yards
Porter Gustin	14	5.5	38

INTERCEPTIONS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Cameron Smith	3	122	40.7	1
Iman Marshall	3	15	5.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

USC is one of only two FBS programs (Utah) to play in a stadium which hosted the Olympic Games. Before the start of the fourth quarter, the Trojan rides Traveler onto the field, accompanied by the sounds of the Spirit of Troy Marching Band, and signals for the lighting of the torch. After the torch is lit, play is ready to resume at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	USC	OPP
SCORING	475	360
Points Per Game	33.9	25.7
FIRST DOWNS	308	309
Rushing	130	119
Passing	158	161
Penalty	20	29
RUSHING YARDAGE	2355	2090
Yards gained rushing	2758	2457
Yards lost rushing	403	367
Rushing Attempts	527	527
Average Per Rush	4.5	4.0
Average Per Game	168.2	149.3
TDs Rushing	26	17
PASSING YARDAGE	3776	3521
Comp-Att-Int	309-463-7	288-457-14
Average Per Pass	8.2	7.7
Average Per Catch	12.2	12.2
Average Per Game	269.7	251.5
TDs Passing	30	25
TOTAL OFFENSE	6131	5611
Total Plays	990	984
Average Per Play	6.2	5.7
Average Per Game	437.9	400.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	52-984	72-1490
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	27-255	17-236
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	14-284	7-42
KICK RETURN AVG.	18.9	20.7
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.4	13.9
INT RETURN AVG.	20.3	6.0
FUMBLES-LOST	12-5	14-9
PENALTIES-YARDS	103-961	71-621
Average Per Game	68.6	44.4
PUNTS-YARDS	67-2685	70-2945
Average Per Punt	40.1	42.1
Net punt average	35.7	37.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:14	30:46
3RD-DOWN CONV.	74/189	68/188
3rd-Down Pct.	39%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	17/26	8/21
4th-Down Pct.	65%	38%
SACKS BY-YARDS	38-249	38-256
MISC. YARDS	30	0
TDS SCORED	63	44
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-17	18-23
ATTENDANCE	527506	291758
Games/Avg Per Game	7/75358	5/58352
Neutral Site Games		2/53402

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
USC	89	168	127	91	0	475
Opponent	87	96	78	99	0	360

5-YEAR RECORD 44-22

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Max Browne** (6-5, 220, Jr.)
	Sam Darnold (6-4, 215, Fr.)
RB	**Justin Davis** (6-1, 195, Sr.)
	Ronald Jones II (6-0, 185, So.)
LT	**Chad Wheeler** (6-7, 280, Sr.)
	Chuma Edoga (6-4, 280, So.)
LG	**Damien Mama** (6-4, 355, Jr.)
	Jordan Simmons (6-4, 325, Sr.)
C	**Khaliel Rodgers** (6-3, 305, Jr.)
	Nico Falah (6-4, 285, Jr.)
RG	**Viane Talamaivao** (6-2, 320, Jr.)
	Toa Lobendahn (6-3, 290, Jr.)
RT	**Zach Banner** (6-9, 360, Sr.)
	Roy Hemsley (6-5, 315, Fr.)
TE	**Taylor McNamara** (6-5, 245, Sr.)
	Tyler Petite (6-6, 235, So.)
WR	**Darreus Rogers** (6-1, 215, Sr.)
	De'Quan Hampton (6-4, 220, Sr.)
WR	**JuJu Smith-Schuster** (6-2, 215, Jr.)
	Isaac Whitney (6-3, 205, Sr.)
WR	**Steven Mitchell Jr.** (5-10, 190, Jr.)
	Ajene Harris (5-11, 185, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Porter Gustin** (6-5, 250, So.)
	Osa Masina (6-4, 245, So.)
DT	**Noah Jefferson** (6-6, 330, So.)
	Malik Dorton (6-2, 275, So.)
NT	**Jacob Daniel** (6-4, 325, So.)
	Josh Fatu (6-3, 290, Jr.)
DT	**Kevin Scott** (6-5, 315, Fr.)
	Rasheem Green (6-5, 285, So.)
DE	**Jabari Ruffin** (6-3, 245, Sr.)
	John Houston Jr. (6-3, 220, Fr.)
LB	**Cameron Smith** (6-2, 245, So.)
	Michael Hutchings (6-1, 225, Sr.)
LB	**Olajuwon Tucker** (6-3, 235, Jr.)
	Uchenna Nwosu (6-3, 210, Jr.)
CB	**Iman Marshall** (6-2, 200, So.)
	Jonathan Lockett (5-11, 180, Jr.)
CB	**Adoree' Jackson** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
	Isaiah Langley (6-0, 165, So.)
FS	**Chris Hawkins** (5-11, 190, Jr.)
	Leon McQuay III (6-1, 190, Sr.)
SS	**John Plattenburg** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
	Marvell Tell III (6-2, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Matt Boermeester** (6-0, 180, Jr.)
P	**Chris Tilbey** (6-5, 220, So.)

Sporting News All-American

UCLA
BRUINS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Josh Rosen

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@TEXAS A&M	
S.10	UNLV	37-3
S.17	@BYU	24-23
S.24	Stanford	35-56
O.1	Arizona	56-30
O.8	@ARIZONA STATE	23-38
O.15	@WASH. STATE	27-31
O.22	Utah	17-9
N.3	@COLORADO	35-31
N.12	Oregon State	41-0
N.19	USC	21-40
N.26	@CALIFORNIA	40-24

COACH

Jim Mora
Fifth year (37-16)
CAREER RECORD: 37-16

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kennedy Polamalu (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Tom Bradley (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Nebraska in the Foster Farms Bowl, 37-29)
STADIUM: Rose Bowl (92,542)
TICKETS: 310-UCLA-WIN
SITE: Los Angeles
WEBSITE: uclabruins.com
TWITTER: @UCLAFootball

You could say UCLA is moving to more of a pro-style offense this season, with a new offensive coordinator and a gifted young quarterback who could fit the scheme better, but that would be news to Jim Mora. The Bruins' fifth-year coach bristled when that term was used during spring practice.

"Everyone is completely overdoing this 'pro-style offense,'" Mora said. "This is just the typical tweaks you would make any year, in any style of play you have. ... I use the word 'concept.'"

OK, then. The Bruins' "concept" this season will be to incorporate a tight end, run a fullback in some formations and ditch the spread for the most part. There may be many versions of it, with all manner of formations being considered under Mora and new offensive coordinator Kennedy Polamalu.

But it's a change, no matter what you call it, and why not? As good as quarterback Josh Rosen was in his debut season, throwing for 282.2 yards a game while earning *Sporting News* Freshman All-America honors, he might be even better with the new look, with a better chance to take advantage of his size, arm and cerebral approach. He'll be able to make more decisions at the line of scrimmage, often under center, while there will be some no-huddle and the spread formation at times.

The only problem is, change takes time, and Rosen isn't the only one going through it. At the same time, UCLA lost key leaders offensively. Three starters alone are gone from the offensive line, including trusty center Jake Brendel, while running back Paul Perkins took off early for the NFL. Despite being granted a sixth year of eligibility, Steven Manfro was forced to retire during spring drills because of never-ending shoulder injuries, leaving the Bruins to fill Perkins' spot in the backfield by committee with, Nate Starks, Soso Jamabo and Bolu Olorunfunmi.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Josh Rosen**

Last year, as a five-star recruit out of St. John Bosco High in Manhattan Beach, Calif., Rosen became the first true freshman to start a season opener for the Bruins at quarterback. The 6-4, 210-pound sophomore didn't disappoint, passing for 3,668 yards and 23 touchdowns while setting numerous school records, including most consecutive pass attempts without an interception (245), most 300-yard passing games (6) and most passing yards per game in a season (282.2). He threw for more than 300 yards against Nebraska, Washington State, Oregon State, California, Stanford and Virginia, with 410 yards of total offense against the Cougars. Rosen must find a new favorite target, however, as the school's all-time leader in receptions, Jordan Payton, has moved on to the NFL after being on the receiving end of 78 Rosen throws in 2015.

ROSEN: JAE C. HONG / AP

The Bruins did receive a break when left tackle Conor McDermott elected to return, giving UCLA leadership up front and protection for Rosen's blind side. Scott Quessenberry is expected to take over center after missing last year with shoulder issues.

Mora's team has had to scrape up candidates at fullback, moving Ainuu Taua and Cameron Griffin over from the defense, while Nate Iese could be a natural fit for tight end. The well-sculpted yet mobile Iese has bounced all over the field in three previous seasons for the Bruins, and was a somewhat underutilized fullback last year. He was rarely needed as a tight end in former offensive coordinator Noel Mazzone's system.

More challenging for UCLA will be finding wide receivers to replace playmakers Jordan Payton, Thomas Duarte and Devin Fuller. The Bruins are hoping veteran wideouts Darren Andrews and Elridge Massington can break out in a bigger way, while they couldn't help but move Ishmael Adams over from cornerback after seeing him rip off touchdown runs on kickoff returns and interceptions alike the last two seasons. Even if Adams stays on the offensive side, he may still pop up again on defense from time to time.

Other than a shift more often to a 4-3 defense, instead of the 3-4, the drama isn't nearly the same defensively. On the line, Kenny Clark is gone but the athletic Eddie Vanderdoes returns from an ACL tear. And while the freakishly athletic Myles Jack and Aaron Wallace have used up their eligibility for the linebacking crew, UCLA returns an intriguing mix of veterans and talented newcomers there. The secondary is loaded, with everyone returning, including second-team all-league safeties Randall Goforth and Jaleel Wadood. Redshirt senior corner Fabian Moreau is back from a Lisfranc foot injury.

The Bruins will have to find a new punter and kicker, but JJ Molson made a name for himself as one of North America's top-rated high school kickers last season. Not that he needed to, really: He's the nephew of Montreal Canadiens owner Geoff Molson, and part of the famously enterprising Canadian family best-known for the beer that bears the family name.

There's a high ceiling with all this experience and talent, but the Bruins won't have much time to work in all the changes. Their September includes Stanford at home and road games at Texas A&M and BYU. If they survive that intact, a run toward the Pac-12 championship will not be a surprise.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

A deep class for UCLA of 29 signees features one of the nation's best linebacking groups. Lokeni Toailoa and Krystopher Barnes are prototype inside linebackers who will really strike you. They're joined by five-star Mique Juarez, one of the nation's most athletic defenders at any position. The Bruins also capitalized on a deep year at receiver, particularly out West. Theo Howard and Dymond Lee are local speedsters with big-play ability and Audie Omotosho is a big-bodied mismatch on the outside. Quietly, Francisco Perez, Michael Alves and high-upside tackle Alex Akingbulu have a chance to blossom into a dominant offensive line of the future as well.

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1 **Mique Juarez,** LB ★★★★★
2 **Theo Howard,** WR ★★★★
3 **Boss Tagaloa,** DT ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Josh Rosen

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	134.3	292-487-11	60.0	3668	23	282.2

RUSHING

	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Soso Jamabo	13	66	404	6.1	4	31.1

RECEIVING

	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Darren Andrews	12	43	443	10.3	1	36.9

TACKLES

	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jayon Brown	12	57	36	93

SACKS

	GP	No.	Yards
Takkarist McKinley	13	4.5	38

INTERCEPTIONS

	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Ishmael Adams	2	109	54.5	1
Randall Goforth	2	17	8.5	0
Jaleel Wadood	2	0	0.0	0

TEAM TRADITION

Before every kickoff, the student section, known as "The Den," uses the drum cadence from the band to point at the opposing kicker. Counting with the beat, students point at the returning team and bounce their arms back toward the kicker, pointing at the end zone, the 20-yard line, the 50-yard line and then the opposing end zone.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	UCLA	OPP
SCORING	419	338
Points Per Game	32.2	26.0
FIRST DOWNS	300	307
Rushing	119	150
Passing	164	128
Penalty	17	29
RUSHING YARDAGE	2300	2578
Yards gained rushing	2582	2935
Yards lost rushing	282	357
Rushing Attempts	460	588
Average Per Rush	5.0	4.4
Average Per Game	176.9	198.3
TDs Rushing	26	17
PASSING YARDAGE	3755	2642
Comp-Att-Int	300-510-13	261-457-12
Average Per Pass	7.4	5.8
Average Per Catch	12.5	10.1
Average Per Game	288.8	203.2
TDs Passing	23	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	6055	5220
Total Plays	970	1045
Average Per Play	6.2	5.0
Average Per Game	465.8	401.5
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	49-1103	24-572
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	20-219	9-60
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-156	13-156
KICK RETURN AVG.	22.5	23.8
PUNT RETURN AVG.	10.9	6.7
INT RETURN AVG.	13.0	12.0
FUMBLES-LOST	14-6	17-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	108-914	77-618
Average Per Game	70.3	47.5
PUNTS-YARDS	64-2477	71-3034
Average Per Punt	38.7	42.7
Net punt average	37.1	39.4
TIME OF POSS./GAME	25:56	34:04
3RD-DOWN CONV.	88/195	86/217
3rd-Down Pct.	45%	40%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	8/14	15/27
4th-Down Pct.	57%	56%
SACKS BY-YARDS	28-176	14-118
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	51	39
FG-ATTEMPTS	20-24	21-24
ATTENDANCE	401149	305636
Games/Avg Per Game	6/66858	6/50939
Neutral Site Games		1/33527

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
UCLA	88	150	100	81	0	419
Opponent	60	100	99	79	0	338

5-YEAR RECORD 43-24

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Josh Rosen** (6-4, 210, So.)
	Mike Fafaul (6-2, 210, Sr.)
FB	**Ainuu Taua** (5-11, 295, So.)
	Cameron Griffin (6-3, 235, So.)
RB	**Nate Starks** (5-11, 210, Jr.)
	Soso Jamabo (6-3, 210, So.)
LT	**Conor McDermott** (6-9, 310, Sr.)
	Andre James (6-4, 290, Fr.)
LG	**Poasi Moala** (6-4, 290, Jr.)
	Najee Toran (6-1, 285, So.)
C	**Scott Quessenberry** (6-4, 280, Jr.)
	Cristian Garcia (6-4, 315, Sr.)
RG	**Kenny Lacy** (6-4, 285, Jr.)
	Tevita Halalilo (6-4, 335, So.)
RT	**Kolton Miller** (6-9, 295, So.)
	Andre James (6-4, 290, Fr.)
TE	**Nate Iese** (6-3, 250, Sr.)
	Austin Roberts (6-2, 215, So.)
WR	**Eldridge Massington** (6-3, 210, Jr.)
	Alex Van Dyke (6-4, 210, Jr.)
WR	**Darren Andrews** (5-10, 185, Jr.)
	Kenneth Walker III (5-10, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Takkarist McKinley** (6-2, 250, Sr.)
	Jacob Tuioti-Mariner (6-2, 275, Jr.)
DT	**Eli Ankou** (6-3, 305, Sr.)
	Nick Terry (6-4, 295, Jr.)
DE	**Eddie Vanderdoes** (6-3, 305, Jr.)
	Matt Dickerson (6-4, 275, Jr.)
OLB	**Cameron Judge** (6-1, 230, Sr.)
	Josh Woods (6-3, 215, So.)
ILB	**Jayon Brown** (6-0, 220, Sr.)
	Isaako Savaiinaea (6-2, 250, Sr.)
ILB	**Kenny Young** (6-1, 235, Jr.)
	Isaako Savaiinaea (6-2, 250, Sr.)
OLB	**Deon Hollins** (6-0, 230, Sr.)
	Keisean Lucier-South (6-4, 215, Fr.)
CB	**Fabian Moreau** (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	John Johnson (5-9, 180, Jr.)
CB	**Marcus Rios** (6-0, 185, Sr.)
	Nate Meadors (6-0, 190, So.)
S	**Randall Goforth** (5-10, 190, Sr.)
	Tahaan Goodman (6-2, 195, Sr.)
S	**Jaleel Wadood** (5-10, 175, Jr.)
	Adarius Pickett (5-11, 190, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**JJ Molson** (6-0, 190, Fr.)
P	**Austin Kent** (6-2, 210, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

UTAH
UTES

3
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

DT Lowell Lotulelei

Five years in the Pac-12, and the Utes have gone from a team trying to belong to one that could win it. Seriously.

USC and UCLA are the South Division favorites, but Utah has powerful lines on both sides of the ball and one of the conference's best defenses, a stable and powerful-enough foundation that allows them to play with anybody.

They just have to answer a few questions on offense–a few big questions. Like finding a quarterback and a running back to at least partially replace graduated rushing star Devontae Booker.

Utah has three viable options to take over at quarterback, the most likely of which might be Troy Williams, the former Washington dual-threat quarterback who went the junior-college route before re-entering the Pac-12. There's also a promising freshman in Tyler Huntley, the returning Brandon Cox and Chase Hansen, a recruited QB who played safety last season.

After Williams and Washington coach Chris Petersen appeared to clash in 2014, Williams went on to account for 38 touchdowns in the California juco ranks at Santa Monica College last season and could give an immediate boost to Utah at quarterback.

Replacing Booker at running back might be tougher, however, after Booker finished third among Pac-12 rushers last season in yards per game. But the speedy Joe Williams played well when Booker was hurt in Utah's last three games, running for 121 yards against UCLA and 91 versus BYU in the Las Vegas Bowl.

Utah also needs help at receiver, especially after losing its top two pass catchers in Britain Covey and Kenneth Scott. But the Utes have two solid returning targets in 6-4 wideout Tyrone Smith and 6-5 tight end Harrison Handley. Also, Cory Butler-Byrd is an option after making a permanent move from corner to wideout.

The Utes add well-regarded first-team Junior College All-American Garett Bolles at tackle to their assortment of riches on a veteran offensive line, while the defensive front is typically tough and resilient. Utah allowed just 108.6 rushing yards per game last season, tops in the Pac-12, while giving up just 22.3 points per game overall, best in the Pac-12 South.

At linebacker, Utah has a combination of returning players and juco transfers to help fill key roles left by graduated standouts Gionni Paul and Jared Norris. The Utes have veteran talent in the secondary, led by all-conference safety Marcus Williams.

One of the Utes' biggest losses is punter Tom Hackett, the two-time Ray Guy Award winner, but Utah replaced him with a fellow Aussie, sophomore juco import Mitch Wishnowsky. Senior Andy Phillips, the school's all-time leader in field goals made (63), is back as the placekicker.

Overall, there's enough talent on hand, especially defensively, to push the Utes toward double-digit wins again.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	Southern Utah	
S.10	BYU	35-28
S.17	@SAN JOSE STATE	
S.23	USC	24-42
O.1	@CALIFORNIA	30-24
O.8	Arizona	30-37
O.15	@OREGON STATE	27-12
O.22	@UCLA	9-17
O.29	Washington	34-23
N.10	@ARIZONA STATE	34-18
N.19	Oregon	62-20
N.26	@COLORADO	20-14

COACH

Kyle Whittingham
12th year (95-46)
CAREER RECORD: 95-46

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Jim Harding (second year)
Aaron Roderick (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Morgan Scalley (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat BYU in the Las Vegas Bowl, 35-28)
STADIUM: Rice-Eccles Stadium (45,017)
TICKETS: 801-581-UTIX
SITE: Salt Lake City
WEBSITE: utahutes.com
TWITTER: @Utah_Football

5-YEAR RECORD
37-26

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Troy Williams (6-2, 200, Jr.)
RB	Joe Williams (5-11, 205, Sr.)
LT	Sam Tevi (6-6, 305, Sr.)
LG	Isaac Asiata (6-3, 323, Sr.)
C	Hiva Lutui (6-1, 295, Sr.)
RG	Salesi Uhatafe (6-5, 315, Jr.)
RT	J.J. Dielman (6-5, 300, Sr.)
TE	Harrison Handley (6-5, 250, Jr.)
WR	Tim Patrick (6-5, 210, Sr.)
WR	Cory Butler-Byrd (5-10, 180, Sr.)
WR	Tyrone Smith (6-4, 205, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Kylie Fitts (6-4, 265, Sr.)
DT	Filipo Mokofisi (6-3, 278, Jr.)
DT	Lowell Lotulelei (6-2, 310, Jr.)
DE	Hunter Dimick (6-3, 272, Sr.)
LB	Sunia Tauteoli (6-0, 220, Jr.)
LB	Cody Barton (6-2, 232, So.)
CB	Reginald Porter (5-11, 185, Sr.)
CB	Brian Allen (6-3, 205, Sr.)
FS	Marcus Williams (6-1, 195, Jr.)
SS	Jason Thompson (6-2, 208, Sr.)
NB	Justin Thomas (5-8, 180, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Andy Phillips (5-10, 210, Sr.)
P	Mitch Wishnowsky (6-2, 220, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES 247 COMPOSITE

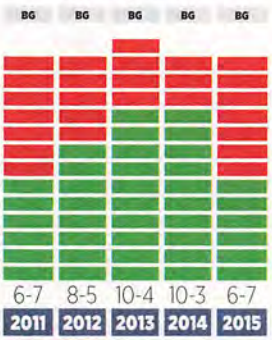
1. **Garett Bolles,** OT ★★★★
2. **Maxs Tupai,** DE ★★★★
3. **David Luafatasaga,** LB ★★★★

Utah could see a starting quarterback emerge from the 2016 class as soon as this fall. That's how good junior-college transfer Troy Williams and south Florida talent Tyler Huntley are. Utah may also have a first-year starter to protect them in Garett Bolles, the No. 2 juco offensive tackle in the country.

LOTULELEI: RICK SCUTERI / AP

ARIZONA STATE
SUN DEVILS

5-YEAR RECORD
40-26



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Manny Wilkins** (6-3, 190, So.)
RB	**Demario Richard** (5-10, 220, Jr.)
LT	**Evan Goodman** (6-4, 310, Sr.)
LG	**Sam Jones** (6-5, 297, So.)
C	**Tyler McClure** (6-1, 271, Jr.)
RG	**Stephon McCray** (6-3, 314, Sr.)
RT	**Quinn Bailey** (6-5, 311, So.)
TE	**Kody Kohl** (6-3, 235, Sr.)
WR	**Ellis Jefferson** (6-5, 212, Jr.)
WR	**Tim White** (5-11, 185, Sr.)
WR	**Cameron Smith** (5-11, 193, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**JoJo Wicker** (6-3, 275, So.)
DT	**Ami Latu** (6-2, 290, Sr.)
DT	**Tashon Smallwood** (6-1, 280, Jr.)
DEV	**A.J. Latu** (6-2, 250, Jr.)
LB	**Laiu Moeakiola** (6-0, 215, Sr.)
LB	**Salamo Fiso** (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LB	**Christian Sam** (6-1, 240, Jr.)
CB	**Maurice Chandler** (6-1, 190, Jr.)
CB	**Gump Hayes** (5-11, 190, Sr.)
FS	**Armand Perry** (6-1, 200, So.)
SS	**Kareem Orr** (5-11, 195, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Zane Gonzalez** (6-1, 190, Sr.)
P	**Matt Haack** (6-1, 199, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **N'Keal Harry,** WR ★★★★
2. **Chase Lucas,** ATH ★★★★
3. **Dougladson Subtyl,** DE ★★★★

A pair of talented in-state teammates in N'Keal Harry and Chase Lucas gave Arizona State's 2016 class a firm foundation. Harry should be an instant contributor at receiver and Lucas brings speed to the roster. Texas passer Dillon Sterling-Cole is the quarterback of a class that went as far east as Maryland to land athlete Robbie Robinson.

LB Salamo Fiso

FISO: CHRIS CODUTO / ICON SPORTSWIRE

Arizona State tied for the nation's lead in sacks per game last season at 3.54, a sexy figure resulting from the Sun Devils' willingness to attack constantly from places such as the "Devilbacker," their ominously named hybrid end/linebacker.

But all those sacks masked an overall slide in the Sun Devils' defense last season: All those blitzing guys left vulnerable a secondary that was further wracked by injuries and inexperience.

So guess what happened when ASU failed to record even one sack at California last season? Predictably, Bears quarterback Jared Goff licked his lips, threw for a school-record 542 yards—and the slumping Bears came back from a 21-point deficit to beat the Sun Devils.

Can this go on? Stats suggest something has to change.

Arizona State allowed the most passing yards in the nation (337.5 per game) and gave up an average of 33.5 points per game, fourth worst in the Pac-12. But coach Todd Graham says his philosophy won't change, so ASU will blitz.

But there's no sign the defense will get much better: The Sun Devils still lack a supremely athletic Devilbacker a la Carl Bradford circa 2012-13, and this time the Sun Devils lose safety Jordan Simone, the Pac-12's second-leading tackler (9.1 per game), plus cornerbacks Kweishi Brown and Lloyd Carrington. Those losses ensure newness again in a defense that demands secondary defenders to thrive in one-on-one situations.

State has proven tough against the run, however, allowing only 126.2 rushing yards per game thanks in large part to linebacker Salamo Fiso, who averaged 7.6 tackles per game last season, including 1.54 for loss.

While the Sun Devils' offense was much less of a worry last season, there's a lot of reconstruction to be done this time around. New coordinator Chip Lindsey will have to find seven new starters on the offense, including replacements for quarterback Mike Bercovici and multiple threat D.J. Foster. Sophomore Manny Wilkins was Bercovici's little-used backup last season, but redshirt freshmen Brady White and Bryce Perkins were also getting first-team reps in spring ball.

Lindsey can build a new attack around his strong one-two punch at running back, with quick scatback Demario Richard and power rusher Kalen Ballage. However, he'll be breaking in four new starters on the offensive line at the same time.

Graham's team finished just 6-7 last season and 4-5 in the Pac-12, yet its offensive losses and defensive troubles suggest things won't get better. A similar finish might be about all the Sun Devils can expect, at least until more talent and experience arrives.

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Northern Arizona	
S.10	Texas Tech	
S.16	@UTSA	
S.24	California	46-48
O.1	@USC	14-42
O.8	UCLA	38-23
O.15	@COLORADO	48-23
O.22	Washington State	24-38
O.29	@OREGON	55-61
N.10	Utah	18-34
N.19	@WASHINGTON	27-17
N.25	@ARIZONA	52-37

COACH

Todd Graham
Fifth year (34-19)
CAREER RECORD: 83-48

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Chip Lindsey (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Keith Patterson (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to West Virginia in the Cactus Bowl, 43-42)
STADIUM: Sun Devil Stadium (64,248)
TICKETS: 480-727-0000
SITE: Tempe, Ariz.
WEBSITE: thesundevils.com
TWITTER: @FootballASU

ARIZONA
WILDCATS

5

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

QB Anu Solomon

After a porous defense helped sink Arizona from first place in the Pac-12 South in 2014 to fifth place last season, coach Rich Rodriguez fired his key defensive staffers, sniffed at the South Carolina job opening and then went underground. He wouldn't say if he'd emerge this fall again with his 3-3-5 "odd stack" defense. Or if the Wildcats would run the 4-2-5 that new defensive coordinator Marcel Yates directed at Boise State, a scheme that also aims to foil spread offenses. Or just a plain, old 3-4.

Questions abounded, but none bigger than this: Will it work?

Arizona went downhill for the first time under Rodriguez last season, with the third-worst defense in the Pac-12 (35.8 points and 467.9 yards allowed per game) having a lot to do with a 3-6 league record and four losses in the Wildcats' final five Pac-12 games. A big part of that, to be sure, was a wave of injuries that rippled through the defense, most notably keeping star linebacker Scooby Wright out most of the season. There were concussions that sidelined quarterback Anu Solomon for all or part of four games, too.

So RichRod tore up everything, including his spring plan. He emphasized fundamental drills throughout spring ball, had no spring game, finished earlier than everyone else in the conference ... and spoke often about the need to upgrade and deepen Arizona's roster via recruiting, an area that also prompted him to hire younger staffers.

While Wright is gone from the heart of the defense, the Wildcats get senior linebacker Cody Ippolito back from an ACL tear that kept him out last season. They also found success moving Paul Magloire from safety to linebacker, though the defensive secondary is thin, especially if senior safety Tellas Jones doesn't return after he was charged with speeding and carrying drug paraphernalia in the offseason.

While Solomon improved last season, he'll have to hold off sophomore Brandon Dawkins, who impressed in Solomon's absence at Arizona State, and quick, strong-armed freshman Khalil Tate, who may have the most upside of the bunch.

At running back, health has sometimes limited Nick Wilson, while the receiver corps lost big targets Cayleb Jones and David Richards but still has ever-improving 6-3 Trey Griffey (Ken Jr.'s son). Sub-six-footers Samajie Grant and Nate Phillips have proven to be effective wideouts, too.

All the personnel shifting and new staffers could make the Wildcats look different, but probably not much better. Even Colorado could catch them in the South if they don't watch out. But with good health, Arizona may be able to at least shift the momentum back in a positive direction.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	BYU*	
S.10	Grambling State	
S.17	Hawaii	
S.24	Washington	3-49
O.1	@UCLA	30-56
O.8	@UTAH	37-30
O.15	USC	30-38
O.29	Stanford	17-55
N.5	@WASH. STATE	42-45
N.12	Colorado	38-31
N.19	@OREGON STATE	44-7
N.25	Arizona State	37-52

At Glendale, AZ

COACH

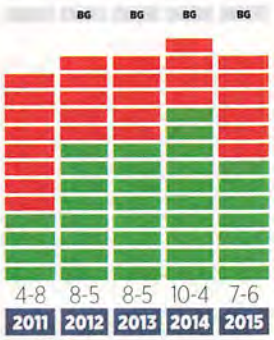
Rich Rodriguez
Fifth year (33-20)
CAREER RECORD: 153-104-2

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Calvin Magee (fifth year)
Rod Smith (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Marcel Yates (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat New Mexico in the New Mexico Bowl, 45-37)
STADIUM: Arizona Stadium (56,029)
TICKETS: 520-621-2287
SITE: Tucson, Ariz.
WEBSITE: arizonawildcats.com
TWITTER: @ArizonaFBall

5-YEAR RECORD
37-28



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Anu Solomon (6-2, 215, Jr.)
RB	Nick Wilson (5-10, 215, Jr.)
LT	Layth Friekh (6-5, 282, Jr.)
LG	Freddie Tagaloa (6-8, 320, Sr.)
C	Zach Hemmila (6-3, 310, Sr.)
RG	Jacob Alsadek (6-7, 318, Jr.)
RT	Gerhard de Beer (6-7, 311, Jr.)
TE	Josh Kern (6-5, 235, Sr.)
WR	Trey Griffey (6-3, 209, Sr.)
WR	Samajie Grant (5-9, 180, Sr.)
WR	Nate Phillips (5-7, 180, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Parker Zellers (6-1, 247, Jr.)
NG	Sani Fuimaono (6-1, 294, Sr.)
DT	Luca Bruno (6-4, 300, Jr.)
OLB	DeAndre' Miller (6-3, 236, Jr.)
MLB	Jake Matthews (6-3, 230, Sr.)
SLB	Cody Ippolito (6-2, 257, Sr.)
OLB	Paul Magloire (6-1, 221, Sr.)
CB	DaVonte' Neal (5-10, 178, Sr.)
CB	Dane Cruikshank (6-1, 204, Jr.)
FS	D. Flannigan-Fowles (6-2, 199, So.)
SS	Jarvis McCall (6-2, 202, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Josh Pollack (5-10, 184, So.)
P	Josh Pollack (5-10, 184, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

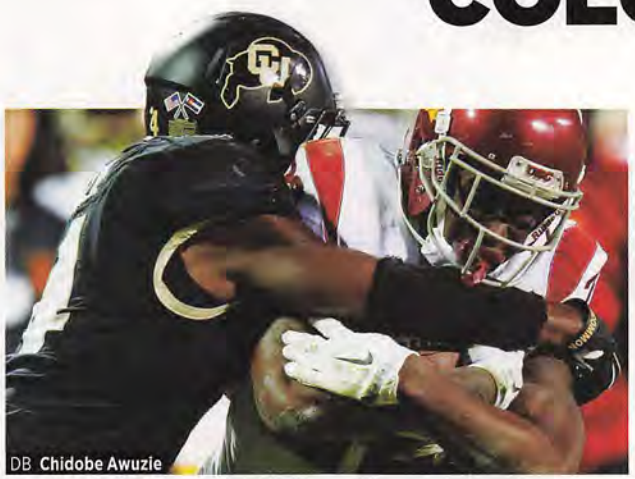
TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Khalil Tate,** QB/ATH ★★★★
2. **Michael Eletise,** OG ★★★★
3. **Chacho Ulloa,** S ★★★

In dual-threat quarterback Khalil Tate, Arizona landed maybe the best prep playmaker in all of California last year. Arizona also got California playmakers in safety Chacho Ulloa and running back J.J. Taylor, who's tiny and elusive.

SOLOMON: RICK SCUTERI / AP

COLORADO
BUFFALOES


DB **Chidobe Awuzie**

AWUZIE: DAVID ZALUBOWSKI / AP

Colorado won 10 games over coach Mike MacIntyre's first three years, which often means there is no fourth year. You have to look behind that won-loss record to see why he's still in Boulder.

While CU won just one Pac-12 game last season and lost its last five straight, the Buffaloes shook off a late loss against Arizona by beating Oregon State on the road, and played both UCLA and USC tough. They couldn't win close games but they weren't getting blown out, either. They had excuses, too. Quarterback Sefo Liufau was lost to a Lisfranc foot injury, while defensive lineman Josh Tupou was lost for the year after he was arrested in a house-party incident. In all, Colorado was without players from its two-deep for a collective 122 games in 2015.

Things look better now. Colorado returns 18 starters and at least one impact transfer, junior-college wideout Juwann Winfree. The Buffs also pursued former Texas Tech quarterback Davis Webb, but he appeared iffy when, after learning that Liufau's recovery was going better than expected, he considered Cal and Auburn in the spring. This came after signing a nonbinding financial-aid agreement with CU in late January. Still, Colorado has some flexibility at quarterback: Big, mobile redshirt freshman Steven Montez impressed in the spring while taking the No. 1 reps and Liufau has a redshirt year available, meaning he can sit out if he's not healthy by September or if he's getting beaten out.

Whoever the quarterback is, the Buffs will be looking to crank up their uptempo offense even more with new co-offensive coordinator Darrin Chiaverini, a former CU receiver who came over from Texas Tech with Webb.

Winfree can help Colorado recover from the loss of record-setting wideout Nelson Spruce, and his size and speed give the Buffs a more physical look to complement shorter speedsters such as Shay Fields.

That, plus an experienced line and a tailback-by-committee coached by former Buff great Darian Hagan, could get CU's offense rebooted after it averaged just 12.8 points over its last four games. Colorado returns three starters on the line, though that was from a unit that allowed a conference-worst 41 sacks.

Defensively last season, the Buffs were strong against the pass, weak against the run and struggled early in Pac-12 play before adjusting, allowing 42.3 points in their first three league games. A multiple look, featuring second-team All-Pac-12 choice Chidobe Awuzie at nickel back, should keep things interesting, while Tupou returns to the line.

There's enough experience on both sides to suggest the Buffs finally learn how to close out games and reach a bowl. If they don't, MacIntyre may find patience has finally run out in Boulder.

5-YEAR RECORD
14-48

WIN **LOSS**
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Sefo Liufau** (6-4, 230, Sr.)
RB	**Phillip Lindsay** (5-8, 180, Jr.)
LT	**Jeromy Irwin** (6-5, 300, Jr.)
LG	**Gerrad Kough** (6-4, 295, Jr.)
C	**Alex Kelley** (6-2, 315, Sr.)
RG	**Jonathan Huckins** (6-4, 310, Jr.)
RT	**John Lisella II** (6-4, 295, So.)
TE	**Sean Irwin** (6-3, 245, Sr.)
WR	**Juwann Winfree** (6-2, 190, Jr.)
WR	**Shay Fields** (5-11, 180, Jr.)
WR	**Devin Ross** (5-9, 180, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DL	**Jordan Carrell** (6-3, 295, Sr.)
DL	**Josh Tupou** (6-3, 325, Sr.)
DL	**Leo Jackson III** (6-3, 275, Jr.)
OLB	**Derek McCartney** (6-3, 240, Jr.)
MLB	**Addison Gillam** (6-3, 225, Jr.)
OLB	**Kenneth Olugbode** (6-1, 215, Sr.)
CB	**Isaiah Oliver** (6-1, 185, So.)
CB	**Ahkello Witherspoon** (6-3, 190, Sr.)
FS	**Ryan Moeller** (6-1, 210, Jr.)
SS	**Tedric Thompson** (6-0, 205, Sr.)
NB	**Chidobe Awuzie** (6-0, 205, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Diego Gonzalez** (6-0, 215, Sr.)
P	**Alex Kinney** (6-1, 215, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Beau Bisharat,** RB/ATH ★★★★
2. **Juwann Winfree,** WR ★★★
3. **Johnny Huntley,** WR ★★★

A small 16-man class for coach Mike MacIntyre covers 10 different states and is full of talent, with 10 players who likely project to skill positions. But Colorado also went big in places. Most notably, in-state offensive linemen Terriek Roberts and Hunter Vaughn are potential massive bookends for the Buffs.

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Colorado State*	27-24
S.10	Idaho State	
S.17	@MICHIGAN	
S.24	@OREGON	24-41
O.1	Oregon State	17-13
O.8	@USC	24-27
O.15	Arizona State	23-48
O.22	@STANFORD	10-42
N.3	UCLA	31-35
N.12	@ARIZONA	31-38
N.19	Washington State	3-27
N.26	Utah	14-20

**At Denver, CO*

COACH

Mike MacIntyre
Fourth year (10-27)
CAREER RECORD: 26-48

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Brian Lindgren (fourth year)
Darrin Chiaverini (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jim Leavitt (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-9
STADIUM: Folsom Field (50,183)
TICKETS: 800-87-BUFFS
SITE: Boulder, Colo.
WEBSITE: cubuffs.com
TWITTER: @RunRalphieRun

PROJECTED FINISH

EAST DIVISION

1. **Tennessee** — BOWL PROJECTION: Orange Bowl
2. **Georgia** — BOWL PROJECTION: Citrus Bowl
3. **Florida** — BOWL PROJECTION: Liberty Bowl
4. **Missouri**
5. **Kentucky**
6. **South Carolina**
7. **Vanderbilt**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Alabama** — BOWL PROJECTION: CFP Semifinals (Peach Bowl)
2. **Ole Miss** — BOWL PROJECTION: Sugar Bowl
3. **LSU** — BOWL PROJECTION: Outback Bowl
4. **Arkansas** — BOWL PROJECTION: Music City Bowl
5. **Auburn** — BOWL PROJECTION: Belk Bowl
6. **Texas A&M** — BOWL PROJECTION: Texas Bowl
7. **Mississippi State** — BOWL PROJECTION: Birmingham Bowl

Calvin Ridley, WR, Alabama

Under coach Nick Saban, Alabama is 62-7 over the last five years with three national championships during that span.

Postseason SEC chant is a familiar refrain that doesn't get old and won't slow down

BY SCOTT RABALAIS
The Advocate (Baton Rouge, La.)

The chant went up everywhere during bowl season. In Charlotte and Houston. Arlington and New Orleans. And, finally and most importantly, in Glendale, Arizona.

"SEC! SEC! SEC!"

It might be evil music to the rest of college football, but to the SEC's new chieftain, it's a sweet refrain.

"The SEC chant is an enjoyable part of the job," tweeted SEC commissioner Greg Sankey after watching Alabama stuff Michigan State into the storage compartment of its team bus in a College Football Playoff semifinal at the Cotton Bowl.

Just one season after it looked like the SEC was in eclipse, drummed out of the inaugural CFP semifinals and losing bowls all over the map, SEC pride (some would call it showing off) was back in a big way in 2015-16.

This season one can expect more of the same.

It speaks well of SEC depth that a team like LSU—with top-three Heisman Trophy candidate Leonard Fournette among its 18 returning starters—is our third-place pick in the SEC West behind Alabama and Ole Miss. The Crimson Tide is coming off a fourth national title in seven years under Nick Saban, while the Rebels have posted back-to-back CFP Big Six bowl appearances.

After a long climb, Tennessee finally looks poised to again plant its flag on the SEC East's Rocky Top. Not that the likes of Georgia (led by new coach and Saban disciple Kirby Smart) and Florida (led by second-year coach and Saban disciple Jim McElwain) won't be poised to stop the Volunteers.

If there's a deal-with-the-devil factor in all of this success for the rest of the SEC, it's Alabama's recent dominance of the dominant. Overall, though, the Crimson Tide's championships have been just a major component of an incredible run which has seen a total of five SEC teams—Alabama, Auburn, Florida, LSU and Tennessee—win 11 of the last 20 CFP and BCS titles. Georgia has been oh so close during that run, and schools like Texas A&M, Ole Miss, Mississippi State and South Carolina have shown at times they aren't that far off.

In other words, it's good to be the SEC. Again.

Like there was ever really any doubt.

CELEBRATION: JOHN BAZEMORE / AP; RIDLEY: TONY GUTIERREZ / AP

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **QB concerns:** Other than Chad Kelly at Ole Miss and Joshua Dobbs at Tennessee, quarterback questions abound. Some teams will answer the questions and flourish; some will see their seasons derailed.

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Luke Stampini, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Alabama	24	3	14	7	301.43
2	LSU	25	2	16	7	290.65
3	Ole Miss	25	3	12	10	281.27
4	Georgia	20	3	10	7	275.60
5	Auburn	21	1	11	9	271.16
6	Florida	25	0	9	16	260.98
7	Tennessee	21	0	10	11	252.01
8	Texas A&M	21	0	8	13	238.99
9	South Carolina	27	0	6	20	218.97
10	Arkansas	21	1	5	14	216.82
11	Mississippi State	18	1	2	15	206.64
12	Kentucky	25	0	3	22	204.31
13	Missouri	19	0	1	18	175.27
14	Vanderbilt	20	0	1	17	171.42

ALL-SEC

OFFENSE

- QB **Chad Kelly,** Sr., Ole Miss
- RB **Leonard Fournette,** Jr., LSU
- RB **Jalen Hurd,** Jr., Tennessee
- OL **Cam Robinson,** Jr., Alabama
- OL **Braden Smith,** Jr., Auburn
- OL **Ethan Pocic,** Sr., LSU
- OL **Greg Pyke,** Sr., Georgia
- OL **Dan Skipper,** Sr., Arkansas
- TE **O.J. Howard,** Sr., Alabama
- WR **Fred Ross,** Sr., Mississippi State
- WR **Calvin Ridley,** So., Alabama

DEFENSE

- DL **Jonathan Allen,** Sr., Alabama
- DL **Derek Barnett,** Jr., Tennessee
- DL **Dalvin Tomlinson,** Sr., Alabama
- DL **Myles Garrett,** Jr., Texas A&M
- LB **Kendell Beckwith,** Sr., LSU
- LB **Reuben Foster,** Sr., Alabama
- LB **Jalen Reeves-Maybin,** Sr., Tennessee
- DB **Jalen Tabor,** Jr., Florida
- DB **Tre'Davious White,** Sr., LSU
- DB **Jamal Adams,** Jr., LSU
- DB **Cameron Sutton,** Sr., Tennessee

SPECIALISTS

- K **Daniel Carlson,** Jr., Auburn
- P **Johnny Townsend,** Jr., Florida

MILES: JONATHAN BACHMAN / AP

↗ NEWSMAKER

A three-game November skid had LSU coach **Les Miles** with one foot in the coaching grave. But he rebounded with a pair of wins, a great recruiting class and kept all but one NFL Draft-minded junior at home. Now LSU looks like a title contender again. With Miles, life is never boring.

↘ OVERRATED

TENNESSEE

The Volunteers deserve to be the SEC East favorite. But if Tennessee can't solve its Alabama and Florida complexes, the Vols may miss their connection to Atlanta.

↘ UNDERRATED

LSU

Much depends on Brandon Harris' ability to throw the ball on critical downs, but if he can, Leonard Fournette's Tigers have all the ingredients for a championship run.

2 Who'll stem the tide: After two straight SEC titles and CFP appearances, Alabama is dwarfing the rest of this proud conference. Can anyone keep the Tide from another crown?

3 East no longer the beast: The Western Division has won seven straight SEC Championship games and eight of the last nine. Remember when the East was the power division?

RATING THE SEC

↘ FASTEST RECEIVER
Eric Hawkins, Arkansas
Hawkins has run the 100 meters in 10.64 seconds and once helped the Razorbacks win an NCAA 4x100 relay title.

↘ BEST HANDS
Calvin Ridley, WR, Alabama
Great hands, great routes, great speed—he's the best thing to happen to Alabama's passing game since Amari Cooper.

↘ BEST PASSING QB
Chad Kelly, Ole Miss
His 4,042 yards was the third-best passing season in SEC history so, yes, he is the best passer.

↘ BEST RUNNING QB
Joshua Dobbs, Tennessee
Dobbs is an aerospace engineering major, so he knows something about going fast.

↘ MOST ELUSIVE RB
Nick Chubb, Georgia
Assuming he can recover from a serious knee injury, no back has his combo of brute strength and dazzling moves.

↘ BEST ATHLETE
Leonard Fournette, RB, LSU
When Fournette was in playground football, parents didn't want their kids to play against him because he was too good. Nothing has changed.

↘ BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Trevor Knight, QB, Texas A&M
Knight won some big games in his OU career, including a Sugar Bowl upset of Alabama. Is there a sequel in him?

↘ TOP NFL PROSPECT
Myles Garrett, DE, Texas A&M
Garrett's pass-rushing skills will make him the top pick from a talent-rich league—maybe No. 1 overall.

↘ TOP FRESHMAN
Jacob Eason, QB, Georgia
The National High School Player of the Year, Eason and new coach Kirby Smart hope to make beautiful music together.

↘ TOP TRANSFER
Luke Del Rio, QB, Florida
The Gators will apparently give Del Rio every chance to be the guy that revives Florida's slumbering offense.

↘ HARDEST HITTER
Tim Williams, LB, Alabama
Had 10.5 sacks last season as a pass-rushing specialist; playing more downs and wreaking more havoc this year.

↘ BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Ish Witter, RB, Missouri
Very generously listed at 5-10 (5-8?), Witter is all heart.

↘ BEST INTERVIEW
Bret Bielema, Arkansas
Sometimes he ignites verbal skirmishes with other SEC coaches, but the head Hog is always refreshingly candid.

↘ BEST COACH
Nick Saban, Alabama
The best in the SEC with five national championships and counting is close to being the best ever, period.

↘ COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Dave Aranda, LSU
His Wisconsin D finished first nationally in scoring defense without anything like the athletes he'll coach at LSU.

↘ HOTTEST SEAT
Kevin Sumlin, Texas A&M
A&M didn't spend hundreds of millions on facility upgrades to go 17-15 in the SEC as it has in Sumlin's four seasons.

↘ LOUDEST STADIUM
Tiger Stadium, LSU
We qualify this by saying it's the loudest for an SEC night game, but under any circumstances, there's no place like it.

↘ TOP SCHOLAR
Brooks Ellis, LB, Arkansas
A second-team Academic All-American, Ellis was named to the Butkus Award watch list for his play and Wuerffel Trophy watch list for academics and community service.

TENNESSEE
VOLUNTEERS

13
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

1
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Jalen Reeves-Maybin

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Appalachian State	
S.10	Virginia Tech*	
S.17	Ohio	
S.24	Florida	27-28
O.1	@GEORGIA	38-31
O.8	@TEXAS A&M	
O.15	Alabama	14-19
O.29	@SOUTH CAROLINA	27-24
N.5	Tennessee Tech	
N.12	Kentucky	52-21
N.19	Missouri	19-8
N.26	@VANDERBILT	53-28

At Bristol, TN

COACH

Butch Jones
Fourth year (21-17)
CAREER RECORD: 71-44

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Mike DeBord (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Bob Shoop (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Northwestern in the Outback Bowl, 45-6)
STADIUM: Neyland Stadium (102,455)
TICKETS: 800-332-VOLS
SITE: Knoxville, Tenn.
WEBSITE: utsports.com
TWITTER: @Vol_Football

Team 120 is ready for takeoff.

This season marks the 120th edition of Tennessee football, and it has been a long time since the expectations on Rocky Top have been higher.

The Volunteers haven't won the SEC East since 2007. They haven't won the conference title since 1998, the year Tennessee captured its most recent national championship as well. The Vols' aspirations have slowly built over coach Butch Jones' first three campaigns, seasons of steady progression from 5-7 to 7-6 to 9-4. Now here is Tennessee, again regarded as a colossus in the East, ready to claim what Volunteers fans regard as this team's manifest destiny.

Jones doesn't duck the expectations, but he knows talk won't make Tennessee a champion again.

"Our players have worked very hard to put themselves in these conversations," Jones said on the eve of spring practice. "But that's all they are—conversations. Team 120 has not yet played a snap of football. We can't be the same players as we were last year. We can't be the same coaching staff. We have to continue to grow."

Eighteen returning starters give Tennessee a remarkable amount of experience and stability by modern college football standards. That stability starts with senior quarterback Joshua Dobbs, who threw for 2,291 yards and 15 touchdowns last season while rushing for 671 yards and 11 more scores.

Dobbs will be backed up by one of the SEC's top rushing duos: junior running backs Jalen Hurd (1,288 yards, 12 touchdowns) and Alvin Kamara (698, 7). His receiving corps is well-balanced, if unspectacular, led by Josh Malone (31 catches, 405 yards, 2 touchdowns) and Josh Smith (23, 307, 2). Tight end Ethan Wolf (23, 301, 2) is yet another returning starter. Senior right guard Dylan Wiesman is a preseason All-SEC candidate and standout on a veteran offensive line.

The Volunteers have standouts at every level of the defense. Derek Barnett had a highly productive season for a defensive

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

LB Jalen Reeves-Maybin

Jalen Reeves-Maybin decided to spurn the NFL Draft and return for his senior season with hopes of helping the Vols win their first SEC title since 1998. One of eight returning starters on defense, the 6-0, 225-pound linebacker will be the field general for the UT defense after leading the team with 105 tackles and 14 tackles for a loss in 2015. That included 11 tackles and a sack against defending FBS champ Alabama at Tuscaloosa in a 19-14 loss. Many draft experts had Reeves-Maybin going in the first three rounds of the April draft, ranking him among the top 10 players at his position. The Clarksville, Tenn., native has the speed to run with slot receivers and the physicality to stand in the box and blow up plays.

REEVES-MAYBIN: BUTCH DILL / AP

end (69 tackles, 10 sacks), while Jalen Reeves-Maybin is a preseason All-SEC pick and the Vols' top tackler from 2015 (105, 6). In the secondary, Cameron Sutton (28 tackles, 6 passes broken up) is also all-conference-caliber as a defensive back and kick returner.

Returning kicks is a specialty for the Vols. Sutton led the FBS in punt-return average (18.7 yards) and Evan Berry topped the nation in kickoff-return average (38.3), with five return touchdowns between them. Even the kickers are veterans: Aaron Medley made 21 of 31 field goals and all 55 extra-point attempts, while Trevor Daniel averaged 45.7 yards per punt.

It hasn't been all sunshine over Tennessee this offseason. There have been distractions. Injuries sidelined 11 players during spring practice, most notably Reeves-Maybin with a hurt shoulder. Tennessee's athletic program was the subject of a sweeping federal lawsuit in February alleging the athletic department enabled and covered up sexual assaults by UT student-athletes, including football players. And Jones found himself embroiled in a Twitter war with Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh over the Wolverines holding spring practice at IMG Academy in Florida, with Harbaugh basically telling Jones he had plenty to worry about at home.

When the season starts there will be other bogeymen in the Vols' closet—one wearing orange and blue, the other wearing crimson and white.

Tennessee has lost 11 straight games against Florida, blowing a 13-point fourth-quarter lead last September to lose 28-27. Tennessee nearly upset eventual national champion Alabama before falling 19-14, but it was still the Vols' ninth straight loss to the Tide and 24th straight against a top 10-ranked opponent.

The time for coming close to being good enough is over, and Jones knows it.

"At the University of Tennessee," Jones said afterward, "there are no moral victories."

The Vols host Florida on Sept. 24 and Alabama on Oct. 15. Before that, though, Tennessee takes on Virginia Tech on Sept. 10 in one of the season's most anticipated nonconference clashes. Billed as "The Battle of Bristol," the game will be played on turf in the infield of Bristol Motor Speedway. Organizers hope the game will draw 150,000 fans to the stadium-like NASCAR facility, which would smash the all-time college attendance record of 117,000.

Vols fans everywhere hope it isn't the only mark that Team 120 will make this season.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Volunteers added a stellar group of defensive backs to their class, likely the best haul at that position in recent history for UT. The group was led by top-100 safety Nigel Warrior as well as Top247 cornerbacks Tyler Byrd and Marquill Osborne. Look for the nation's top junior-college prospect, defensive end Jonathan Kongbo, to provide immediate help for coach Butch Jones this fall. Tennessee also helped restock its talent on the offensive side of the ball with the additions of top-100 dual-threat quarterback Jarrett Guarantano and four-star wide receiver Marquez Callaway. The Volunteers' recruiting class was good enough for No. 14 in the nation overall.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Nigel Warrior,** S ★★★★
2. **Jonathan Kongbo,** DE ★★★★
3. **Jarrett Guarantano,** QB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Joshua Dobbs

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	127.0	205-344-5	59.6	2291	15	176.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Jalen Hurd	13	277	1288	4.6	12	99.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Josh Malone	13	31	405	13.1	2	31.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jalen Reeves-Maybin	13	66	39	105

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Derek Barnett	13	10.0	51

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Todd Kelly Jr.	3	5	1.7	0

TEAM TRADITION

Starting in 1964 with coach Doug Dickey, Tennessee began a tradition that is today one of the best entrances in the game. The Pride of the Southland Marching Band creates a 330-person "T" for the Volunteers to enter the field. Following the state flag, Tennessee flag and Smokey the Bluetick Coonhound, 100,000-plus fans welcome the Vols onto the Neyland Stadium field to the sounds of "Rocky Top."

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	TENN	OPP
SCORING	457	260
Points Per Game	35.2	20.0
FIRST DOWNS	293	235
Rushing	150	97
Passing	130	120
Penalty	13	18
RUSHING YARDAGE	2908	1971
Yards gained rushing	3224	2251
Yards lost rushing	316	280
Rushing Attempts	617	470
Average Per Rush	4.7	4.2
Average Per Game	223.7	151.6
TDs Rushing	32	13
PASSING YARDAGE	2582	2735
Comp-Att-Int	220-371-5	220-434-12
Average Per Pass	7.0	6.3
Average Per Catch	11.7	12.4
Average Per Game	198.6	210.4
TDs Passing	17	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	5490	4706
Total Plays	988	904
Average Per Play	5.6	5.2
Average Per Game	422.3	362.0
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	27-902	45-821
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	33-567	19-214
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-208	5-5
KICK RETURN AVG.	33.4	18.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	17.2	11.3
INT RETURN AVG.	17.3	1.0
FUMBLES-LOST	20-7	16-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	66-530	85-734
Average Per Game	40.8	56.5
PUNTS-YARDS	63-2850	90-3853
Average Per Punt	45.2	42.8
Net punt average	39.0	35.6
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:32	29:28
3RD-DOWN CONV.	97/211	53/192
3rd-Down Pct.	46%	28%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	13/17	18/24
4th-Down Pct.	76%	75%
SACKS BY-YARDS	30-179	23-173
MISC. YARDS	1	0
TDS SCORED	56	33
FG-ATTEMPTS	21-31	10-15
ATTENDANCE	704088	312809
Games/Avg Per Game	7/100584	4/78202
Neutral Site Games		2/57262

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
TENNESSEE	130	139	109	72	7	457
Opponent	52	66	55	73	14	260

5-YEAR RECORD 31-31

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Joshua Dobbs** (6-3, 207, Sr.)
	Quinten Dormady (6-4, 216, So.)
RB	**Jalen Hurd** (6-4, 240, Jr.)
	Alvin Kamara (5-10, 215, Jr.)
LT	**Chance Hall** (6-4, 318, So.)
	Drew Richmond (6-5, 301, Fr.)
LG	**Jashon Robertson** (6-3, 315, Jr.)
	Jack Jones (6-4, 307, So.)
C	**Coleman Thomas** (6-5, 301, Jr.)
	Ray Raulerson (6-4, 287, So.)
RG	**Dylan Wiesman** (6-4, 304, Sr.)
	Venzell Boulware (6-3, 306, Fr.)
RT	**Brett Kendrick** (6-6, 318, Jr.)
	Dontavius Blair (6-7, 294, Sr.)
TE	**Ethan Wolf** (6-6, 245, Jr.)
	Jason Croom (6-5, 246, Sr.)
WR	**Jauan Jennings** (6-3, 201, So.)
	Preston Williams (6-4, 209, So.)
WR	**Josh Smith** (6-1, 216, Jr.)
	Vincent Perry (5-10, 175, Fr.)
WR	**Josh Malone** (6-3, 197, Jr.)
	Jeff George (6-6, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Corey Vereen** (6-2, 249, Sr.)
	Jonathan Kongbo (6-6, 260, So.)
DT	**Kendal Vickers** (6-3, 286, Jr.)
	Shy Tuttle (6-2, 311, So.)
DT	**Danny O'Brien** (6-2, 301, Sr.)
	Kahlil McKenzie (6-3, 344, So.)
DE	**Derek Barnett** (6-3, 257, Jr.)
	LaTroy Lewis (6-4, 256, Sr.)
OLB	**Kenny Bynum** (6-1, 227, Sr.)
	Gavin Bryant (6-0, 238, So.)
MLB	**Darrin Kirkland Jr.** (6-1, 224, So.)
	Colton Jumper (6-2, 224, Jr.)
OLB	**Jalen Reeves-Maybin** (6-0, 225, Sr.)
	Cortez McDowell (6-0, 240, Jr.)
CB	**Cameron Sutton** (5-11, 186, Sr.)
	Emmanuel Moseley (5-11, 179, Jr.)
CB	**Justin Martin** (6-1, 183, Jr.)
	D.J. Henderson (6-1, 180, Jr.)
FS	**Todd Kelly Jr.** (5-11, 208, Jr.)
	Micah Abernathy (6-0, 193, So.)
SS	**Rashaan Gaulden** (6-1, 178, So.)
	Evan Berry (5-11, 207, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Aaron Medley** (6-2, 189, Jr.)
P	**Trevor Daniel** (6-1, 248, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

GEORGIA
BULLDOGS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

19
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Dominick Sanders

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	North Carolina*	
S.10	Nicholls State	
S.17	@MISSOURI	9-6
S.24	@OLE MISS	
O.1	Tennessee	31-38
O.8	@SOUTH CAROLINA	52-20
O.15	Vanderbilt	31-14
O.29	Florida**	3-27
N.5	@KENTUCKY	27-3
N.12	Auburn	20-13
N.19	Louisiana	
N.26	Georgia Tech	13-7

*At Atlanta, GA
**At Jacksonville, FL

COACH

Kirby Smart
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jim Chaney (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mel Tucker (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3 *(Beat Penn State in the TaxSlayer Bowl, 24-17)*
STADIUM: Sanford Stadium (92,746)
TICKETS: 877-542-1231
SITE: Athens, Ga.
WEBSITE: georgiadogs.com
TWITTER: @FootballUGA

For years, Kirby Smart was a most wanted man.

Season after season, schools with coaching vacancies had the same mantra: Get Smart. But he chose to remain a loyal lieutenant on Nick Saban's staff at Alabama, biding his time until the right opportunity came his way.

Some thought Smart might wait long enough to succeed his boss in Tuscaloosa. But no one could argue that Smart made a wrong choice by taking the job at Georgia.

Most schools seek a coaching change because their program is in the dumps. Georgia became dissatisfied with Mark Richt and years of almost-but-not-quite results (the school hasn't won an SEC championship since 2005), but the Bulldogs are hardly in need of a refit. Georgia is coming off a 10-3 season (its TaxSlayer Bowl win was under interim coach Bryan McClendon) and has won at least 10 games in four of its last five seasons. One could argue Smart inherited the best situation of any first-year coach in the nation: a consistently winning program at a deep-pocketed school in a talent-rich state.

Smart, indeed.

"We want to start that climb," says Smart, who received a $3.75 million per year contract to coach the Bulldogs, "toward building what we hope to build."

Once the preseason buzz around Smart dissipated, questions turned quickly to the Bulldogs' quarterback situation.

Brice Ramsey and Faton Bauta (who transferred in December to Colorado State) both logged significant playing time behind Greyson Lambert, who went an underappreciated 10-2 as a starter. Lambert, who threw for 1,959 yards, 12 touchdowns and two interceptions in 2015, was expected to have to fight off both Ramsey (249 yards, 1 touchdown, 2 interceptions) and five-star freshman prodigy Jacob Eason. The consensus National High School Player of the

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

FS Dominick Sanders

The No. 1 pass defense in the country from last season returns all four starters, and it's led by Sanders. The 6-0, 189-pound junior led the SEC in interceptions with six and had five tackles for loss from his free safety position. Returning with him in the Bulldog secondary will be five other players who combined with Sanders to make 53 starts for a defense that ranked eighth nationally in third-down defense. With Sanders holding down the back end of the secondary, new Georgia head coach Kirby Smart says he plans to unleash his cornerbacks this year to play more man coverage so that he can put together aggressive schemes like he did when he was defensive coordinator at Alabama.

SANDERS: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

Year, Eason enrolled in January so he could take part in spring practice.

"We're going to evaluate those guys each day," Smart says. "We're going to encourage them to worry about getting better each day, not worrying about the result of each day."

Whoever ends up taking most of the snaps behind center will have the luxury of handing off to one of the best running back corps in the nation.

That distinction is predicated on Nick Chubb (747 yards and 7 touchdowns in 6 games) making a 100-percent recovery from his serious knee injury last October at Tennessee. Either way, he'll share the tailback load with the exceptionally talented Sony Michel (1,161 yards, 8 touchdowns), who wound up as the SEC's third-leading returning rusher.

Terry Godwin is the top returning pair of hands at wide receiver (35 catches, 379 yards, 2 touchdowns), but aside from him no receiver or tight end had more than 15 receptions last season. Isaiah McKenzie (10 catches, 123 yards) must elevate his game from role player and return specialist to likely full-time starter. Meanwhile, the offensive line is searching for a cohesive starting five. Brandon Kublanow hopes to take an All-SEC-worthy turn again at center.

The secondary returns intact, led by strong safety Quincy Mauger (58 tackles) and free safety Dominick Sanders (48 tackles, 6 interceptions, 1 touchdown). The retooling front seven will lean on their expertise. Look for defensive end Trenton Thompson (25 tackles) to ripen into the kind of player one recruiting service ranked as 2015's top prep prospect. Inside linebacker Tim Kimbrough is Georgia's top returning tackler with 67 stops. Outside linebacker Lorenzo Carter (19 tackles) was an enigma last season and is another potential defensive standout who must grow up quickly.

Placekicker Marshall Morgan left as the SEC's third all-time leading scorer and will be replaced by redshirt freshman Rodrigo Blankenship. Ramsey, who beat out Collin Barber during the season, averaged 41.9 yards per attempt.

Smart's first Georgia team will be a lot like the Georgia teams that got Richt fired: talented, capable, but not quite ready to be counted on to win the SEC East. The schedule opens September with a revealing game against North Carolina at the Georgia Dome. It closes the opening month with a telling test at Ole Miss, which precedes an Oct. 1 home game with Tennessee. Those two pivotal weeks will likely put the Bulldogs' in the East driver's seat or relegate them to spoiler status.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The coaching change after the season made it a less than ideal situation for the Bulldogs on the recruiting trail, but new coach Kirby Smart was able to still secure a top recruiting class during his short time in Athens. The marquee name in Georgia's class was five-star quarterback Jacob Eason, who is expected to compete for the starting job as a true freshman. The nation's No. 1 tight end, Isaac Nauta, and the nation's No. 1 athlete, Mecole Hardman, were two elite prospects that Smart and crew were able to secure just before National Signing Day.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Jacob Eason,** QB ★★★★★
2. **Isaac Nauta,** TE ★★★★★
3. **Mecole Hardman,** ATH ★★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Greyson Lambert	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	12	141.5	162-256-2	63.3	1959	12	163.2

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Sony Michel	13	219	1161	5.3	8	89.3

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Terry Godwin	13	35	379	10.8	2	29.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Tim Kimbrough	12	28	39	67

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Davin Bellamy	10	3.0	13

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Dominick Sanders	6	205	34.2	1

TEAM TRADITION

One of Georgia's many storied traditions can be heard throughout Sanford Stadium on any given Saturday. Before every kickoff, Georgia fans "Call the Dawgs" by raising their right hand above their head and swinging it around. A long, drawn out "Gooooooooo" leads up to the kickoff, when the chant is finished with "Dawgs! Sic 'em! Woof! Woof! Woof!"

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	UGA	OPP
SCORING	342	220
Points Per Game	26.3	16.9
FIRST DOWNS	241	189
Rushing	116	89
Passing	114	87
Penalty	11	13
RUSHING YARDAGE	2498	1943
Yards gained rushing	2721	2175
Yards lost rushing	223	232
Rushing Attempts	486	491
Average Per Rush	5.1	4.0
Average Per Game	192.2	149.5
TDs Rushing	22	11
PASSING YARDAGE	2406	2034
Comp-Att-Int	199-327-8	178-344-12
Average Per Pass	7.4	5.9
Average Per Catch	12.1	11.4
Average Per Game	185.1	156.5
TDs Passing	14	11
TOTAL OFFENSE	4904	3977
Total Plays	813	835
Average Per Play	6.0	4.8
Average Per Game	377.2	305.9
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	32-578	45-954
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	30-394	18-152
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	12-258	8-138
KICK RETURN AVG.	18.1	21.2
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.1	8.4
INT RETURN AVG.	21.5	17.2
FUMBLES-LOST	24-10	22-10
PENALTIES-YARDS	67-592	63-442
Average Per Game	45.5	34.0
PUNTS-YARDS	67-2685	83-3296
Average Per Punt	40.1	39.7
Net punt average	35.7	34.0
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:08	30:52
3RD-DOWN CONV.	49/158	57/197
3rd-Down Pct.	31%	29%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/12	13/25
4th-Down Pct.	42%	52%
SACKS BY-YARDS	21-121	15-105
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	41	26
FG-ATTEMPTS	18-27	13-19
ATTENDANCE	649222	424931
Games/Avg Per Game	7/92746	4/70523
Neutral Site Games		2/71420

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
GEORGIA	75	92	119	50	6	342
Opponent	25	97	42	56	0	220

5-YEAR RECORD 50-17

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Greyson Lambert** (6-5, 220, Sr.)
	Jacob Eason (6-5, 211, Fr.)
FB	**Christian Payne** (6-1, 232, Jr.)
	Glenn Welch (6-3, 244, Jr.)
RB	**Nick Chubb** (5-10, 220, Jr.)
	Sony Michel (5-11, 212, Jr.)
LT	**Kendall Baker** (6-6, 310, So.)
	Aulden Bynum (6-5, 268, Jr.)
LG	**Isaiah Wynn** (6-2, 278, Jr.)
	Ben Cleveland (6-6, 345, Fr.)
C	**Brandon Kublanow** (6-3, 282, Sr.)
	Lamont Gaillard (6-2, 298, So.)
RG	**Dyshon Sims** (6-4, 293, Jr.)
	Sam Madden (6-6, 346, Fr.)
RT	**Greg Pyke** (6-6, 313, Sr.)
	Pat Allen (6-4, 297, Fr.)
TE	**Jeb Blazevich** (6-5, 248, Jr.)
	Jackson Harris (6-6, 247, So.)
WR	**Terry Godwin** (5-11, 174, So.)
	Reggie Davis (6-0, 170, Sr.)
WR	**Isaiah McKenzie** (5-8, 170, Jr.)
	Shakenneth Williams (6-1, 199, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Trenton Thompson** (6-4, 307, So.)
	Julian Rochester (6-5, 327, Fr.)
NT	**John Atkins** (6-4, 300, Jr.)
	DaQuan Hawkins (6-4, 302, So.)
DE	**Jonathan Ledbetter** (6-4, 251, So.)
	Michael Barnett (6-4, 276, So.)
OLB	**Lorenzo Carter** (6-6, 242, Jr.)
	Chuks Amaechi (6-3, 230, Sr.)
ILB	**Reggie Carter** (6-1, 228, Jr.)
	Natrez Patrick (6-3, 248, So.)
ILB	**Tim Kimbrough** (6-0, 226, Sr.)
	Roquan Smith (6-1, 217, So.)
OLB	**Davin Bellamy** (6-5, 241, Jr.)
	D'Andre Walker (6-3, 224, So.)
CB	**Malkom Parrish** (5-10, 188, Jr.)
	Rico McGraw (6-0, 192, So.)
CB	**Aaron Davis** (6-1, 190, Jr.)
	Juwuan Briscoe (5-11, 193, So.)
FS	**Dominick Sanders** (6-0, 189, Jr.)
	Jarvis Wilson (6-2, 190, So.)
SS	**Quincy Mauger** (6-0, 200, Sr.)
	Rashad Roundtree (6-1, 205, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Rodrigo Blankenship** (6-1, 185, Fr.)
P	**Brice Ramsey** (6-3, 213, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

FLORIDA
GATORS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Jalen Tabor

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Massachusetts	
S.10	Kentucky	14-9
S.17	North Texas	
S.24	@TENNESSEE	28-27
O.1	@VANDERBILT	9-7
O.8	LSU	28-35
O.15	Missouri	21-3
O.29	Georgia*	27-3
N.5	@ARKANSAS	
N.12	South Carolina	24-14
N.19	Presbyterian	
N.26	@FLORIDA STATE	2-27

At Jacksonville, FL

COACH

Jim McElwain
Second year (10-4)
CAREER RECORD: 32-20

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Doug Nussmeier (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Geoff Collins (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-4
(Lost to Michigan in the Citrus Bowl, 41-7)
STADIUM: Ben Hill Griffin Stadium (88,548)
TICKETS: 800-34-GATOR
SITE: Gainesville, Fla.
WEBSITE: floridagators.com
TWITTER: @GatorsFB

There was definitely a Shakespearian quality to the Florida Gators' first season under coach Jim McElwain.

After the struggles of the Will Muschamp Era, it was the best of times in many respects, as the Gators won 10 games and returned to the SEC Championship Game for the first time since 2009.

But there was a worst of times quality to the 2015 season as well. Following a 10-1 start that included wrapping up the SEC East title by mid-November, Florida dropped its last three games to Florida State (27-2), Alabama in the SEC title game (29-15) and Michigan in the Citrus Bowl (41-7), with the Gators' offense becoming almost unresponsive by that point.

The quarterback position became ground zero of Florida's offensive issues. The Gators were sailing along to a nice 6-0 start when quarterback Will Grier was handed a one-year PED suspension the week of Florida's first loss to LSU. McElwain put the offense back in the hands of Treon Harris, but the results were middling at best as Harris completed just 50.6 percent of his passes for 1,676 yards and nine touchdowns. Grier decided to transfer—landing at West Virginia—instead of sitting out a year of NCAA-imposed exile in Gainesville. Harris went from shuffled down the depth chart to out to wide receiver where he sits as a backup.

That means the Gators will be starting over under center this fall. The top name on that list is Luke Del Rio, the son of Jack Del Rio, current Oakland Raiders and former Jacksonville Jaguars head coach.

Del Rio has covered considerable ground in his college career—enrolling at Alabama in 2013 where he redshirted, then participating

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

CB **Jalen Tabor**

The All-SEC junior from Washington, D.C., returns to a stacked Gator defensive unit that is especially overflowing with talent in the secondary. Over the past two years, the 6-0, 200-pound Tabor has refined his play to become one of the premier shutdown corners in the country. Last season he nabbed four interceptions to go along with a team-high 14 pass breakups and four tackles for loss.

TABOR: PHELAN M. EBENHACK / AP

in spring football at Oregon State in 2014 before transferring to Florida where he sat out the 2015 season. McElwain, who had an eye on the coach's son since he was an eighth-grader in Colorado while he was coaching at Colorado State, gave him rave reviews in spring practice. But no words change the fact the Gators are likely to pin 2016's hopes to the jersey of a player who has yet to throw a pass in a live college game. If not Del Rio, the Gators could turn to Austin Appleby, a graduate transfer who started 11 games and threw for 2,777 career yards at Purdue.

The tailback spot contains similar question marks. Kelvin Taylor, last year's 1,000-yard rusher, is gone, leaving the tailback duties to a pair of lightly used Jordans: Jordan Scarlett (34 carries, 181 yards, 1 touchdown) and Jordan Cronkrite (44, 157, 3). Mark Thompson, a brusing 242-pound junior-college transfer, could also be a factor.

The 2015 season saw the debut of what may well be the next great Florida talent: wide receiver Antonio Callaway. He's the Gators' top-returning receiver with 35 catches for 678 yards and four touchdowns and also averaged 15.5 yards per punt return with two scores. Callaway and Harris missed time in spring practice with disciplinary issues.

Depth is a concern on a defense that gave up only 18.3 points and 310.2 yards per game last season. All-American Vernon Hargreaves III is gone to the NFL, but Jalen Tabor (40 tackles, four interceptions, 14 passes broken up) returns. Some Florida football observers say Tabor was the better talent. Senior linebacker Jarrad Davis is the Gators' top returning tackler (98 stops, 11 for loss) and should get All-SEC consideration. Junior Caleb Brantley (29 tackles, 3.0 sacks) could be a star in the making.

Florida's kicking woes were almost comic last season as the Gators' kickers went a combined seven-of-17 on field goals and 36-of-41 on extra points. Florida will turn to redshirt sophomore Eddy Pineiro, who has yet to kick in a live game. By comparison, Florida's punting situation is in great shape with All-SEC punter Johnny Townsend (45.4-yard average).

Getting a beat on how good the Gators will be this season is difficult given Florida's critical question marks. Tennessee is the team to beat in the East but Florida has beaten the Volunteers 11 straight times. If the Gators can continue their hex on the Vols and get productive play at quarterback, their defense should be good enough again to make them competitive with Tennessee and Georgia for the SEC East crown.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Gators' ability to add 12 early enrollees in the 2016 class should help Florida fill holes on the roster this fall after getting the group through spring practices. Florida was also looking to significantly improve the talent on the offensive side of the ball, especially receiver, which it got with a trio of four-star wideouts—Tyrie Cleveland, Freddie Swain and Josh Hammond. The Gators continued their run of landing elite playmakers on the defensive side of the ball with a pair of instant-impact top-100 prospects in defensive back Chauncey Gardner and end Antonneous Clayton.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Antonneous Clayton,** DE ★★★★
2. **Tyrie Cleveland,** WR ★★★★
3. **Chauncey Gardner,** DB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Treon Harris

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	118.1	119-235-6	50.6	1676	9	139.7

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Treon Harris	12	96	238	2.5	0	19.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Antonio Callaway	14	35	678	19.4	4	48.4

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Jarrad Davis	14	46	52	98

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Cece Jefferson	14	3.5	33
Joey Ivie	10	3.5	27
Bryan Cox Jr.	14	3.5	26
Jarrad Davis	14	3.5	22

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jalen Tabor	4	82	20.5	2

TEAM TRADITION

At the end of the third quarter, 90,000 orange-and blue-clad Gator fans stand up, throw their arms around each other, sway from side to side and sing "We Are the Boys from Old Florida." The Fightin' Gator Marching Band plays the song while the fans sing in unison. It's one of the many traditions that make Florida a difficult place to play.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	FLA	OPP
SCORING	325	256
Points Per Game	23.2	18.3
FIRST DOWNS	234	237
Rushing	96	106
Passing	129	111
Penalty	9	20
RUSHING YARDAGE	1777	1793
Yards gained rushing	2225	2294
Yards lost rushing	448	501
Rushing Attempts	510	508
Average Per Rush	3.5	3.5
Average Per Game	126.9	128.1
TDs Rushing	19	12
PASSING YARDAGE	2899	2550
Comp-Att-Int	229-405-10	231-425-14
Average Per Pass	7.2	6.0
Average Per Catch	12.7	11.0
Average Per Game	207.1	182.1
TDs Passing	20	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	4676	4343
Total Plays	915	933
Average Per Play	5.1	4.7
Average Per Game	334.0	310.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	33-693	26-534
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	32-446	33-129
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	14-247	10-3
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.0	20.5
PUNT RETURN AVG.	13.9	3.9
INT RETURN AVG.	17.6	0.3
FUMBLES-LOST	18-7	26-11
PENALTIES-YARDS	91-737	70-506
Average Per Game	52.6	36.1
PUNTS-YARDS	84-3765	89-3940
Average Per Punt	44.8	44.3
Net punt average	43.3	42.8
TIME OF POSS./GAME	30:58	29:02
3RD-DOWN CONV.	75/206	70/209
3rd-Down Pct.	36.4	33.5
4TH-DOWN CONV.	14/27	12/20
4th-Down Pct.	51.9	60.0
SACKS BY-YARDS	40-294	46-275
MISC. YARDS	0	25
TDS SCORED	44	30
FG-ATTEMPTS	7-17	15-20
ATTENDANCE	630457	537725
Games/Avg Per Game	7/60065	4/78666
Neutral Site Games		3/74354

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
FLORIDA	91	81	72	75	6	325
Opponent	29	88	50	89	0	256

5-YEAR RECORD 39-25

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Luke Del Rio** (6-1, 213, So.)
	Austin Appleby (6-4, 235, Sr.)
RB	**Jordan Cronkrite** (5-11, 204, So.)
	Jordan Scarlett (5-10, 213, So.)
LT	**David Sharpe** (6-6, 347, Jr.)
	Martez Ivey (6-5, 312, So.)
LG	**Martez Ivey** (6-5, 312, So.)
	Antonio Riles (6-4, 311, Jr.)
C	**Cameron Dillard** (6-4, 308, Jr.)
	Tyler Jordan (6-4, 295, So.)
RG	**Tyler Jordan** (6-4, 295, So.)
	Andrew Mike (6-6, 303, So.)
RT	**Fred Johnson** (6-6, 315, So.)
	Kavaris Harkless (6-5, 307, So.)
TE	**DeAndre Goolsby** (6-4, 240, Jr.)
	C'yontai Lewis (6-4, 230, So.)
WR	**Antonio Callaway** (5-11, 195, So.)
	Alvin Bailey (5-11, 186, Jr.)
WR	**Ahmad Fulwood** (6-4, 211, Sr.)
	Chris Thompson (6-0, 170, Sr.)
WR	**Brandon Powell** (5-9, 184, Jr.)
	Dre Massey (5-9, 183, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Bryan Cox Jr.** (6-3, 260, Sr.)
	Keivonnis Davis (6-4, 244, So.)
DT	**Caleb Brantley** (6-2, 300, Jr.)
	Khairi Clark (6-2, 326, So.)
DT	**Joey Ivie** (6-3, 290, Sr.)
	Taven Bryan (6-5, 293, So.)
DE	**Cece Jefferson** (6-1, 270, So.)
	Jordan Sherit (6-4, 251, Jr.)
OLB	**Jarrad Davis** (6-2, 240, Sr.)
	Matt Rolin (6-3, 220, Jr.)
MLB	**Alex Anzalone** (6-3, 237, Sr.)
	Kylan Johnson (6-1, 228, Fr.)
OLB	**Daniel McMillian** (6-1, 227, Sr.)
	Rayshad Jackson (6-0, 220, Fr.)
CB	**Jalen Tabor** (6-0, 200, Jr.)
	Chris Williamson (5-11, 192, So.)
CB	**Quincy Wilson** (6-1, 211, Jr.)
	Chauncey Gardner (5-11, 205, Fr.)
S	**Duke Dawson** (5-10, 202, Jr.)
	Nick Washington (6-0, 198, Jr.)
S	**Marcus Maye** (6-0, 210, Sr.)
	Marcell Harris (6-1, 207, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Eddy Pineiro** (6-0, 183, So.)
P	**Johnny Townsend** (6-1, 210, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

MISSOURI
TIGERS

4

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

DE Charles Harris

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@WEST VIRGINIA	
S.10	Eastern Michigan	
S.17	Georgia	6-9
S.24	Delaware State	
O.1	@LSU	
O.15	@FLORIDA	3-21
O.22	Middle Tennessee	
O.29	Kentucky	13-21
N.5	@SOUTH CAROLINA	24-10
N.12	Vanderbilt	3-10
N.19	@TENNESSEE	8-19
N.26	Arkansas	3-28

COACH

Barry Odom
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Josh Heupel (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS: DeMontie Cross (first year), Ryan Walters (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Faurot Field (71,168)
TICKETS: 800-CAT-PAWS
SITE: Columbia, Mo.
WEBSITE: mutigers.com
TWITTER: @MizzouFootball

It has been a year of upheaval at Missouri, of protests and calls for change within the school's administration.

No one called for it, but change is what the Missouri football program got.

Gary Pinkel announced his retirement late in the 2015 season after going public with his battle with lymphoma. Pinkel steps away after leading the Tigers to a school-record 118 wins over 15 seasons and a pair of SEC Championship Game appearances in 2013 and '14.

Getting the Tigers back to competing for the SEC East title after a 5-7 season now falls to the man who was Missouri's defensive coordinator last year, Barry Odom, a 39-year-old former Mizzou linebacker.

"I'm tremendously honored to have this opportunity," Odom says. "My vision, without question, will be championships in all walks of life. I'm not afraid to say that out loud."

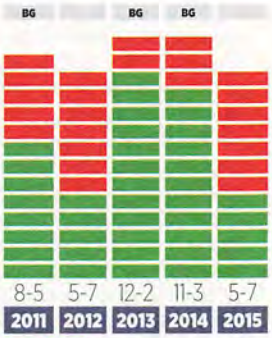
Last season, the Tigers ranked last in the SEC in scoring and total offense (13.6 points per game, 280.9 yards per game). Mizzou goes into this year with starting quarterback Drew Lock and top tailback Ish Witter basically occupying their roles by default. Lock, who threw for 111 yards per game in 2015 and completed just 49.1 percent of his passes, is the Tigers' only signal-caller with any experience. It's the same story with Witter, who rushed for 518 yards and one touchdown last season.

Chris Black, a graduate transfer from Alabama, figures to bolster a deep but unproven receiver corps under new offensive coordinator Josh Heupel. Senior tight end Sean Culkin, the MU leader on the roster with 37 career receptions, will be counted on as a receiver and blocker.

The Tigers were second in the SEC in yards allowed (302.0 per game) and points allowed (16.2) last season despite being on the field too much because of the sputtering offense. But replacing outside linebacker Kentrell Brothers, the nation's leading tackler with 12.7 per game, will be a huge challenge. Joey Burkett, who had just nine tackles in 11 games last season, takes his spot, but the bulk of the tackling chores will likely fall to middle linebacker Michael Scherer, who made 93 stops last year.

Expectations are somewhat tempered in Columbia. That said, the two recent SEC East titles elevated the program to the point where anything less than seven or eight wins will be viewed as a disappointment. Odom should have the defense to make the Tigers a bowl team, but the offense has to at least stop being a liability for that to happen.

5-YEAR RECORD
41-24



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Drew Lock (6-4, 205, So.)
RB	Ish Witter (5-10, 190, Jr.)
LT	Tyler Howell (6-8, 305, Jr.)
LG	Nate Crawford (6-5, 300, Jr.)
C	Alec Abeln (6-3, 290, Jr.)
RG	Kevin Pendleton (6-4, 315, So.)
RT	Paul Adams (6-6, 290, So.)
TE	Sean Culkin (6-6, 245, Sr.)
WR	Nate Brown (6-3, 205, Jr.)
WR	Keyon Dilosa (6-3, 200, So.)
WR	Chris Black (6-0, 192, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Charles Harris (6-3, 255, Jr.)
DT	Rickey Hatley (6-4, 285, Sr.)
DT	Josh Augusta (6-4, 345, Sr.)
DE	Walter Brady (6-3, 255, So.)
OLB	Joey Burkett (6-2, 210, Jr.)
MLB	Michael Scherer (6-3, 235, Sr.)
OLB	Donavin Newsom (6-2, 230, Sr.)
CB	Aarion Penton (5-10, 190, Sr.)
CB	John Gibson (6-0, 190, Sr.)
FS	Cam Hilton (6-0, 180, So.)
SS	Anthony Sherrils (6-0, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Tucker McCann (6-0, 185, Fr.)
P	Corey Fatony (5-11, 185, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Nate Strong,** RB ★★★★
2. **Brendan Scales,** TE ★★★
3. **Tre Williams,** DE ★★★

The Tigers were looking to fill voids on the roster with prospects that could help immediately, especially on the offensive side of the ball. That is why they went to the junior-college ranks to land four-star running back Nate Strong, wide receiver Dominic Collins and safety Greg Taylor.

HARRIS: SCOTT GRAU / ICON SPORTSWIRE

KENTUCKY WILDCATS

5-YEAR RECORD 19-41

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
5-7	2-10	2-10	5-7	5-7

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB **Stanley Williams**

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

5

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Drew Barker** (6-3, 225, So.)
RB	**Stanley Williams** (5-9, 196, Jr.)
LT	**Tate Leavitt** (6-6, 310, Jr.)
LG	**Nick Haynes** (6-3, 308, Jr.)
C	**Jon Toth** (6-5, 310, Sr.)
RG	**Ramsey Meyers** (6-4, 320, Jr.)
RT	**Kyle Meadows** (6-5, 298, Jr.)
TE	**C.J. Conrad** (6-5, 245, So.)
WR	**Jeff Badet** (6-0, 182, Jr.)
WR	**Dorian Baker** (6-3, 208, Jr.)
WR	**Garrett Johnson** (5-11, 182, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Courtney Miggins** (6-5, 250, Sr.)
NG	**Matt Elam** (6-7, 360, Jr.)
DT	**Regie Meant** (6-4, 302, Jr.)
OLB	**Denzil Ware** (6-2, 255, So.)
ILB	**Courtney Love** (6-2, 245, Jr.)
ILB	**Jordan Jones** (6-2, 215, So.)
OLB	**De'Niro Laster** (6-4, 235, Jr.)
CB	**Chris Westry** (6-4, 185, So.)
CB	**Derrick Baity** (6-3, 180, So.)
FS	**Mike Edwards** (6-0, 200, So.)
SS	**Marcus McWilson** (6-0, 208, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Austin MacGinnis** (5-10, 175, Jr.)
P	**Grant McKinniss** (6-1, 210, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Landon Young,** OT ★★★★
2. **Drake Jackson,** C ★★★★
3. **Kash Daniel,** LB ★★★★

The Wildcats dominated the recruiting trail in their own back yard by signing the Bluegrass State's top three prospects: offensive tackle Landon Young, center Drake Jackson, and linebacker Kash Daniel. They also went the junior-college route to sign five prospects they hope will provide an immediate impact on the field.

Kentucky remodeled Commonwealth Stadium and built the Wildcats a shiny new indoor practice facility.

But after three years under Mark Stoops as head coach, it's fair to ask when will the construction project that is UK football produce a finished product.

The Wildcats started 5-1 in 2014 but finished 0-6. After opening 4-1 last season, UK stumbled to a 1-6 second half, both times watching its bowl hopes evaporate with season-ending losses to archrival Louisville.

Even at basketball-mad Kentucky, where football is the appetizer instead of the main course, the honeymoon appears to be over for Stoops. He knows as much as anyone that it's time for some tangible success.

"We're moving into Year Four and we should be better," Stoops says.

Stoops went looking for answers in the offseason, firing offensive coordinator Shannon Dawson after deciding Dawson's "Air Raid" offense wasn't a fit with his defensive sensibilities. Stoops replaced Dawson with co-coordinators Eddie Gran and Darin Hinshaw, both formerly of Cincinnati. Gran will call plays and coach running backs while Hinshaw directs the quarterbacks.

"I like where we're at," Stoops says. "I like the staff that we have in place. I like the players' attitude. We've had a better offseason than we have any other year."

The Gran/Hinshaw offense will add pro-style elements to the playbook but will still be mostly a spread attack. That means a lot will be expected from sophomore quarterback Drew Barker.

Barker inherits the offense from Patrick Towles–he left for Boston College as a graduate transfer in the offseason–after completing 35 of 70 passes for 364 yards last year. The top receiving targets are experienced, though, with Dorian Baker (55 catches, 608 yards), Garrett Johnson (46, 694) and Jeff Badet (29, 430) returning. Stanley "Boom" Williams (121 carries, 855 yards, 6 TDs) is a strong, steady running back.

Defensively, Kentucky will operate out of a base 3-4 with Regie Meant (31 tackles) leading the charge up front at tackle. Courtney Love, a transfer from Nebraska, is on track to take over at middle linebacker, while sophomore Chris Westry (36 tackles, 2 interceptions) anchors the secondary. Kicker Austin MacGinnis, an All-SEC pick two years ago, is healthy again after an injury-plagued 2015.

The road schedule is daunting with trips to Florida, Alabama and Tennessee, but the Wildcats should again find themselves in that five-to-seven-win range. Whether or not UK can wind up in plus-.500 territory could mean the difference between a rebuilding project in the head coach's office or not.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Southern Miss	
S.10	@FLORIDA	9-14
S.17	New Mexico State	
S.24	South Carolina	26-22
O.1	@ALABAMA	
O.8	Vanderbilt	17-21
O.22	Mississippi State	16-42
O.29	@MISSOURI	21-13
N.5	Georgia	3-27
N.12	@TENNESSEE	21-52
N.19	Austin Peay	
N.26	@LOUISVILLE	24-38

COACH

Mark Stoops
Fourth year (12-24)
CAREER RECORD: 12-24

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Eddie Gran (first year)
Darin Hinshaw (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
D.J. Eliot (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Commonwealth Stadium (61,000)
TICKETS: 800-928-2287
SITE: Lexington, Ky.
WEBSITE: ukathletics.com
TWITTER: @UKFootball

WILLIAMS: DAVID STEPHENSON / AP

SOUTH CAROLINA
GAMECOCKS

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

LB Skai Moore

Who is more in need of redemption: South Carolina or its new coach, Will Muschamp?

The Gamecocks have gone 10-15 the last two years after Steve Spurrier led them to back-to-back-to-back 11-2 seasons. Muschamp went 28-21 in four years at Florida with just one 11-2 season among them, the kind of overall record that used to be acceptable in Columbia but has long been out of fashion in Gainesville.

If there's one thing Muschamp learned at Florida, it's how high Spurrier set the bar. In his new job, little has changed.

"Coach Spurrier raised the expectation level here," says Muschamp, who spent last season as defensive coordinator at Auburn. "We're going to continue to push that forward and push the envelop to win championships consistently here in Columbia."

That's something Spurrier and his predecessor, fellow Hall of Fame coach Lou Holtz, couldn't do. South Carolina's only football title of any kind remains its 1969 ACC championship, though Spurrier guided the Gamecocks to the 2010 SEC Championship Game.

Muschamp retained only one assistant, making the noble choice of keeping offensive line coach Shawn Elliott after he served as interim coach after Spurrier quit midway through last season. Muschamp brought in Kurt Roper as co-offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach, remarking that he would have done better at Florida if he'd hired Roper earlier in his tenure there. Roper worked under Muschamp at UF in 2014.

It will be Roper's task to wade into a modest stable of quarterbacks and pull out a winner. The spring front-runner was senior Perry Orth, who passed for 1,929 yards with 12 touchdowns and nine interceptions last year. He has the experience edge on Lorenzo Nunez and Connor Mitch, though all have started games.

The Gamecocks will be hard-pressed to replace All-SEC wide receiver Pharoh Cooper. Sophomore Deebo Samuel had 12 catches and a touchdown in five games last year, making him the most productive receiver Carolina has. The running game is in a similar fix. David Williams is the top returning rusher (299 yards in 2015) and Elliott must find three new starters on the offensive line.

As at Florida, Muschamp is expected to have a big impact on the defense, which is transitioning to a 3-4 set under coordinator Travaris Robinson. The Gamecocks got a huge boost in January when leading tackler Skai Moore (111 stops) decided to return and could either play linebacker or safety.

The season's first two games (at Vandy, home vs. Mississippi State) are critical if the Gamecocks want to get bowl-eligible.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	@VANDERBILT	19-10
S.10	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
S.17	East Carolina	
S.24	@KENTUCKY	22-26
O.1	Texas A&M	28-35
O.8	Georgia	20-52
O.22	Massachusetts	
O.29	Tennessee	24-27
N.5	Missouri	10-24
N.12	@FLORIDA	14-24
N.19	Western Carolina	
N.26	@CLEMSON	32-37

COACH

Will Muschamp
First year
CAREER RECORD: 28-21

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kurt Roper (first year)
Bryan McClendon (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Travaris Robinson (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: Williams-Brice Stadium (80,250)
TICKETS: 800-4SC-FANS
SITE: Columbia, S.C.
WEBSITE: gamecocksonline.com
TWITTER: @GamecockFB

5-YEAR RECORD
43-21

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Perry Orth (6-0, 200, Sr.)
RB	David Williams (6-1, 216, Jr.)
LT	Mason Zandi (6-9, 308, Sr.)
LG	Zack Bailey (6-6, 313, So.)
C	Alan Knott (6-4, 280, Jr.)
RG	Cory Helms (6-4, 306, Jr.)
RT	Blake Camper (6-7, 293, So.)
TE	Hayden Hurst (6-4, 250, So.)
WR	Deebo Samuel (6-0, 205, So.)
WR	Bryan Edwards (6-3, 205, Fr.)
WR	Matrick Belton (6-3, 215, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Marquavius Lewis (6-4, 270, Sr.)
DT	Kelsey Griffin (6-2, 302, Sr.)
DT	Taylor Stallworth (6-2, 310, Jr.)
DE	Darius English (6-5, 240, Sr.)
OLB	Larenz Bryant (6-0, 217, Sr.)
MLB	Skai Moore (6-2, 218, Sr.)
OLB	Bryson Allen-Williams (6-1, 230, Jr.)
CB	Rico McWilliams (5-11, 179, Sr.)
CB	Rashad Fenton (5-11, 185, So.)
FS	Jasper Sasser (6-0, 204, Jr.)
SS	Toure Boyd (5-11, 184, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Elliott Fry (6-0, 165, Sr.)
P	Sean Kelly (5-10, 195, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

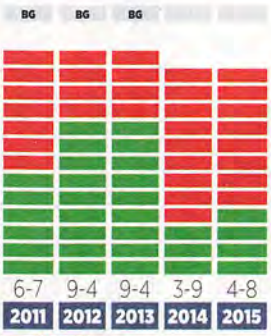
1 **Brandon McIlwain,** QB ★★★★
2 **Bryan Edwards,** WR ★★★★
3 **Stephon Taylor,** DT ★★★★

Getting four-star quarterback Brandon McIlwain to enroll early—and spurn a chance to enter the Major League Baseball Draft—was likely new coach Will Muschamp's biggest win on the recruiting trail this cycle. The Gamecocks also landed another key offensive weapon in 6-3 four-star receiver Bryan Edwards.

MOORE: STEPHEN B. MORTON / AP

VANDERBILT
COMMODORES

5-YEAR RECORD
31-32



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB Ralph Webb

Year Two of the Derek Mason Era at Vanderbilt was one of progress and just a glimpse of promise.

What passes for progress at Vandy–going 4-8 overall and 2-6 in SEC play–wouldn't pass for anything but a disaster at most SEC schools. There's more patience at scholarly Vanderbilt, of course, but with back-to-back nine-win campaigns under former coach James Franklin, the Commodores' fans acquired a taste of the good life.

While Mason is a combined 7-17 (2-14 SEC) in his first two seasons, it's not out of the question that Vandy could steam into bowl contention in 2016. The key to squeezing out a couple more key victories will be finding a way to put more points on the board. Vandy's offense barely had a pulse last season, ranking 116th in yards per game (326.5) and 123rd in points per game (15.2).

Finding a productive quarterback is the primary mission. In the spring, sophomore Kyle Shurmur (son of former Cleveland Browns head coach Pat Shurmur) had the inside track on junior Wade Freebeck. Shurmur has a big edge in experience, completing 44 of 103 passes for 503 yards, five touchdowns and three interceptions in 2015.

Quarterbacks need playmakers, and Vandy returns a couple of important ones in wide receiver C.J. Duncan and tight end DeAndre Woods. Duncan was the Commodores' best receiver in 2014 but missed all of last season with a torn Achilles' tendon. Woods had seven catches for 129 yards in three games before he was lost to an ACL injury.

Also back is top receiver Trent Sherfield (51 catches, 659 yards, 3 TDs). The Commodores are well-manned at tailback with 1,000-yard rusher Ralph Webb (1,152 yards, 5 TDs), who could break Vandy's career rushing record by season's end.

Defense was a strength last season–Vandy defenders allowed just 350.5 yards and 21.0 points per game–and could be even better in 2016.

Vandy should have one of the best linebacker corps in the SEC with the return of leading tackler and preseason All-SEC pick Zach Cunningham (103 tackles, 4.5 sacks). Also back inside is Nigel Bowden, a true playmaker who bowed out after just two games last season because of a serious concussion problem.

Nose tackle Jay Woods (24 tackles) anchors the defensive front while safety Oren Burks (59) spearheads the secondary.

Placekicker Tommy Openshaw (12-of-19 field goals, 14-of-14 extra points in 2015) also handled the punting duties last year (40.9 yards per punt), but he is expected to hand them to incoming freshman Sam Loy.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Kyle Shurmur (6-4, 223, So.)
RB	Ralph Webb (5-10, 200, Jr.)
LT	Andrew Jelks (6-6, 303, Sr.)
LG	Delando Crooks (6-5, 307, Jr.)
C	Cole Hardin (6-4, 307, So.)
RG	Bruno Reagan (6-3, 316, So.)
RT	Will Holden (6-7, 313, Sr.)
TE	DeAndre Woods (6-3, 235, Jr.)
WR	C.J. Duncan (5-11, 203, Jr.)
WR	Trent Sherfield (6-1, 199, Jr.)
WR	Caleb Scott (6-1, 198, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Jonathan Wynn (6-4, 255, Jr.)
NT	Jay Woods (6-3, 285, Jr.)
DE	Adam Butler (6-5, 300, Sr.)
OLB	Landon Stokes (6-4, 240, Jr.)
ILB	Nigel Bowden (6-1, 239, Jr.)
ILB	Zach Cunningham (6-4, 230, Jr.)
OLB	Nehemiah Mitchell (6-4, 255, Sr.)
CB	Tre Herndon (6-1, 188, Jr.)
CB	Torren McGaster (6-0, 200, Sr.)
FS	Oren Burks (6-3, 215, Jr.)
SS	Emmanuel Smith (6-2, 222, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Tommy Openshaw (6-2, 188, Jr.)
P	Sam Loy (6-1, 185, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. Joejuan Williams, CB ★★★★
2. Sean Auwae, C/OG ★★★
3. Zaire Jones, S ★★★

The Commodores, who have to search far and wide for prospects due to Vandy's high academic standards, signed prospects from 12 different states in 2016. However, they did not have to travel far to land their biggest get in the class with local four-star cornerback Joejuan Williams.

7

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.1	South Carolina	10-19
S.10	Middle Tennessee	17-13
S.17	@GEORGIA TECH	
S.24	@WEST. KENTUCKY	12-14
O.1	Florida	7-9
O.8	@KENTUCKY	21-17
O.15	@GEORGIA	14-31
O.22	Tennessee State	
N.5	@AUBURN	
N.12	@MISSOURI	10-3
N.19	Ole Miss	16-27
N.26	Tennessee	28-53

COACH

Derek Mason
Third year (7-17)
CAREER RECORD: 7-17

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Andy Ludwig (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Derek Mason (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Vanderbilt Stadium (40,550)
TICKETS: 615-322-GOLD
SITE: Nashville
WEBSITE: vucommodores.com
TWITTER: @VandyFootball

WEBB: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

ALABAMA
CRIMSON TIDE

1
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

1
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Jonathan Allen

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	USC*	
S.10	Western Kentucky	
S.17	@OLE MISS	37-43
S.24	Kent State	
O.1	Kentucky	
O.8	@ARKANSAS	27-14
O.15	@TENNESSEE	19-14
O.22	Texas A&M	41-23
N.5	@LSU	30-16
N.12	Mississippi State	31-6
N.19	Chattanooga	
N.26	Auburn	29-13

At Arlington, TX

COACH

Nick Saban
10th year (105-18)
CAREER RECORD: 196-60-1

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Lane Kiffin (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jeremy Pruitt (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 14-1
(Beat Clemson in the College Football Playoff National Championship Game, 45-40)
STADIUM: Bryant-Denny Stadium (101,821)
TICKETS: 205-348-BAMA
SITE: Tuscaloosa, Ala.
WEBSITE: rolltide.com
TWITTER: @AlabamaFTBL

The man who runs the Cadillac of college football programs is reportedly expanding his domain in Mercedes-Benz dealerships.

Maybe after his fifth national championship–fourth in the last seven years–Nick Saban is looking for new worlds to conquer.

Not that Saban, who turns 65 on Halloween (yes, Halloween), appears to be slowing down. In fact, he may be accelerating his pursuit of the unofficial mantle of the greatest college football coach of all time.

Paul "Bear" Bryant, the all-time Alabama legend, won six wire-service national championships, but at least four of those were split titles. Saban has four BCS crowns (three at Alabama, one at LSU that was split with USC) and a first CFP title claimed in a 45-40 January shootout win over Clemson.

A day after that victory, Saban talked about his future by shedding some light on his past.

"I've been part of a team since I was 9 years old," Saban said. "It scares me to think of a day when I wouldn't be part of a team. I know you can't do this forever, but I certainly enjoy the moment and certainly look forward to the future challenges we have, and really have no timetable for not ever being part of a team."

Though Alabama will be expected to be back in championship contention again this fall, the Crimson Tide have some significant holes to fill at running back, quarterback and on defense to make that happen.

The Crimson Tide go into the fall shorthanded at running back. Heisman Trophy winner Derrick Henry and his 2,219 yards and 28 touchdowns rushing (both SEC records) is gone to the NFL along with his chief backup, Kenyan Drake (408 yards, 1 touchdown). That leaves Bo Scarbrough and Damien Harris, with their combined 261 yards rushing and two touchdowns, creating the most inexperienced tailback situation in Saban's 10 years in Tuscaloosa. Considering Scarbrough has been injury prone,

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

DE **Jonathan Allen**

For Alabama it begins and ends with a stout defensive unit—especially the front line—and Allen made a name for himself last year playing beside two departed standouts, A'Shawn Robinson and Jarran Reed, who'll be making their living in the NFL this year. The 6-3, 294-pound All-SEC first-teamer was one of the most productive defensive linemen in the country, making a team-leading 14.5 tackles for loss and producing the second-most sacks in the SEC (12). This year, Allen won't be sneaking up on anybody. He's a surefire All-America candidate and potential first-round NFL pick if he can keep producing at this rate.

ALLEN: ERIC GAY / AP

opportunity may open quickly here for incoming recruits B.J. Emmons and Joshua Jacobs.

The question marks are nearly as big at quarterback after the departure of senior Jake Coker. Junior Cooper Bateman (37-for-52 passing, 291 yards, 1 touchdown, 2 interceptions) has the edge in age but is expected to receive a hard push from redshirt freshman Blake Barnett.

Either one will have an impressive group of targets to throw to, led by *Sporting News* Freshman All-America wide receiver Calvin Ridley (89 catches, 1,045 yards, 7 touchdowns) and tight end O.J. Howard (38, 602, 2). The always imposing offensive line is anchored at left tackle by junior Cam Robinson, who sat out spring practice recovering from shoulder surgery.

When longtime lieutenant Kirby Smart left to become head coach at Georgia, Saban reached into his past for a replacement at defensive coordinator. Jeremy Pruitt returns to Alabama from Georgia, having served as secondary coach in Tuscaloosa from 2010-12.

Pruitt will have to partially retool the defensive front after the departure of A'Shawn Robinson (46 tackles) and Jarran Reed (57 tackles). Former No. 1 prospect Da'Shawn Hand (16 tackles) takes over at end opposite All-SEC performer Jonathan Allen (36 tackles, 12 sacks) with Da'Ron Payne (13 stops) projected at tackle.

The biggest concern may be finding a replacement for Reggie Ragland at middle linebacker. The battle this spring was between three candidates: Shaun Dion Hamilton, Keith Holcombe and Rashaan Evans, who otherwise will probably wind up as a starter on the outside. Senior Tim Williams likely heads into the fall as a backup at the other outside linebacker spot behind Ryan Anderson, but his 10.5 sacks in a specialist's role last year proved him to be nearly unblockable, and perhaps the best outside linebacker Saban has ever had.

Strong safety Eddie Jackson (46 tackles, 6 interceptions) is the star of the defensive secondary. The kicking game continues to rest on the capable feet of placekicker Adam Griffith (23-of-32 field goals, 62-of-62 PATs) and punter JK Scott (44.2 yards per punt, 25 inside the 20).

Alabama opens with USC in Arlington, Texas, and faces an exceptionally challenging SEC road schedule with Ole Miss (which has won two straight over the Tide), Arkansas, Tennessee and LSU. Still, expecting this Cadillac to turn into a lemon this season is a fool's errand. Expect the Tide to find a way to motor into its third CFP berth in as many tries.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Crimson Tide marched to their sixth straight No. 1 recruiting class in 2016. Alabama ended the cycle with a furious finish that saw nine prospects commit to its class on National Signing Day. That haul included a pair of five-star linebackers in Ben Davis and Lyndell Wilson. Those linebackers headlined an outstanding defensive haul for the Tide that also included top-100 prospects in cornerback Shyheim Carter, defensive end Terrell Hall and defensive tackles Raekwon Davis and Kendell Jones. Alabama also added five-star offensive tackle Jonah Williams, who should compete for a starting job as a true freshman.

TOP SIGNEES (247 STAR RATING)

1 **Ben Davis,** LB ★★★★★
2 **Jonah Williams,** OT ★★★★★
3 **Lyndell Wilson,** LB ★★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Cooper Bateman	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	15	116.8	37-52-2	71.2	291	1	19.4

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Damien Harris	12	46	157	3.4	1	13.1

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Calvin Ridley	15	89	1045	11.7	7	69.7

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Reuben Foster	15	48	25	73

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Jonathan Allen	15	12.0	88

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Eddie Jackson	6	230	38.3	2

TEAM TRADITION

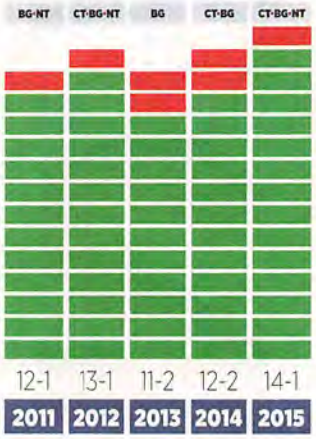
At the end of every Crimson Tide victory, the traditional cheer "Rammer Jammer" is performed by the Million Dollar Band. The name originates from the student magazine "Rammer Jammer" and the Alabama state bird, the yellowhammer. The opposing team's nickname is chanted multiple times followed by "We just beat the hell outta you!" The cheer originated in 1982 and continues to this day.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	ALA	OPP
SCORING	526	227
Points Per Game	35.1	15.1
FIRST DOWNS	330	223
Rushing	158	67
Passing	147	129
Penalty	25	27
RUSHING YARDAGE	2999	1136
Yards gained rushing	3351	1625
Yards lost rushing	352	489
Rushing Attempts	642	468
Average Per Rush	4.7	2.4
Average Per Game	199.9	75.7
TDs Rushing	33	7
PASSING YARDAGE	3407	3009
Comp-Att-Int	301-446-10	250-495-19
Average Per Pass	7.6	6.1
Average Per Catch	11.3	12.0
Average Per Game	227.1	200.6
TDs Passing	22	17
TOTAL OFFENSE	6406	4145
Total Plays	1088	963
Average Per Play	5.9	4.3
Average Per Game	427.1	276.3
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	37-803	41-779
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	47-597	27-279
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	19-462	10-140
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.7	19.0
PUNT RETURN AVG.	12.7	10.3
INT RETURN AVG.	24.3	14.0
FUMBLES-LOST	12-7	25-8
PENALTIES-YARDS	89-835	90-696
Average Per Game	55.7	46.4
PUNTS-YARDS	72-3120	113-4556
Average Per Punt	43.3	40.3
Net punt average	37.0	34.2
TIME OF POSS./GAME	33:35	26:25
3RD-DOWN CONV.	80/214	65/227
3rd-Down Pct.	37%	29%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	12/24	7/20
4th-Down Pct.	50%	35%
SACKS BY-YARDS	53-337	25-189
MISC. YARDS	15	-20
TDS SCORED	65	26
FG-ATTEMPTS	23-33	16-27
ATTENDANCE	707786	348365
Games/Avg Per Game	7/101112	4/87091
Neutral Site Games		4/74544

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
ALABAMA	88	166	134	138	0	526
Opponent	33	64	50	80	0	227

5-YEAR RECORD 62-7



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Cooper Bateman** (6-3, 224, Jr.)
	Blake Barnett (6-5, 200, Fr.)
RB	**Bo Scarbrough** (6-2, 230, So.)
	Damien Harris (5-11, 214, So.)
LT	**Cam Robinson** (6-6, 327, Jr.)
	Jonah Williams (6-5, 288, Fr.)
LG	**Dallas Warmack** (6-2, 299, So.)
	Bradley Bozeman (6-5, 312, Jr.)
C	**Ross Pierschbacher** (6-4, 304, So.)
	J.C. Hassenauer (6-2, 297, Jr.)
RG	**Alphonse Taylor** (6-5, 345, Sr.)
	Brandon Kennedy (6-3, 302, Fr.)
RT	**Lester Cotton** (6-4, 319, So.)
	Korren Kirven (6-4, 308, Sr.)
TE	**O.J. Howard** (6-6, 242, Sr.)
	Hale Hentges (6-5, 256, So.)
WR	**Calvin Ridley** (6-1, 188, So.)
	Robert Foster (6-2, 191, Jr.)
WR	**ArDarius Stewart** (6-1, 204, Jr.)
	Gehrig Dieter (6-3, 207, Sr.)
WR	**Robert Foster** (6-2, 191, Jr.)
	Cam Sims (6-5, 206, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Dalvin Tomlinson** (6-3, 307, Sr.)
	Da'Shawn Hand (6-4, 278, Jr.)
NT	**Da'Ron Payne** (6-2, 319, So.)
	Joshua Frazier (6-4, 315, Jr.)
DE	**Jonathan Allen** (6-3, 294, Sr.)
	O.J. Smith (6-2, 315, So.)
OLB	**Rashaan Evans** (6-3, 230, Jr.)
	Christian Miller (6-4, 230, So.)
ILB	**Reuben Foster** (6-1, 240, Sr.)
	Keith Holcombe (6-4, 227, So.)
ILB	**Shaun Dion Hamilton** (6-0, 232, Jr.)
	Rashaan Evans (6-3, 230, Jr.)
OLB	**Ryan Anderson** (6-2, 253, Sr.)
	Tim Williams (6-4, 237, Sr.)
CB	**Minkah Fitzpatrick** (6-1, 200, So.)
	Kendall Sheffield (6-0, 188, Fr.)
CB	**Marlon Humphrey** (6-1, 198, So.)
	Tony Brown (6-0, 195, Jr.)
FS	**Ronnie Harrison** (6-3, 216, So.)
	Hootie Jones (6-2, 214, Jr.)
SS	**Eddie Jackson** (6-0, 194, Sr.)
	Maurice Smith (6-0, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Adam Griffith** (5-10, 193, Sr.)
P	**JK Scott** (6-5, 198, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

OLE MISS
REBELS

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

Ole Miss

7
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Chad Kelly

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.5	Florida State*	
S.10	Wofford	
S.17	Alabama	43-37
S.24	Georgia	
O.1	Memphis	24-37
O.15	@ARKANSAS	52-53
O.22	@LSU	38-17
O.29	Auburn	27-19
N.5	Georgia Southern	
N.12	@TEXAS A&M	23-3
N.19	@VANDERBILT	27-16
N.26	Mississippi State	38-27

At Orlando, FL

COACH

Hugh Freeze
Fifth year (34-18)
CAREER RECORD: 64-25

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Matt Luke (fifth year)
Dan Werner (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Dave Wommack (fifth year)
Jason Jones (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Beat Oklahoma State in the Sugar Bowl, 48-20)
STADIUM: Vaught-Hemingway Stadium (64,038)
TICKETS: 888-732-8587
SITE: Oxford, Miss.
WEBSITE: olemisssports.com
TWITTER: @OleMissFB

Life literally keeps getting better and better for the Ole Miss Rebels.

Ole Miss has improved its record each year under coach Hugh Freeze. The Rebels have gone from seven to eight to nine and now 10 wins after a 48-20 Sugar Bowl rout of Oklahoma State. It was Ole Miss' first trip to the New Orleans New Year's Day classic in 46 years.

Now comes the next big step: making it to the SEC Championship Game and having a shot at the school's first conference title since 1963 and the CFP semifinals.

Despite a big turnover on the depth chart, the talented Rebels may have a chance to do just that, though Freeze knows the climb gets steeper closer to the top.

"Obviously, playing in two (straight) New Year's Six games creates expectations," Freeze says. "In order for us to maintain that here, there is an extra step that we need to go. There are things that we as coaches need to improve on as well as our players."

The Rebels already have two things working in their favor for 2016: confidence and a talented, veteran quarterback.

Confidence comes from the program's first-ever two-game winning streak over Alabama. Dovetailing into that is the play of senior Chad Kelly.

The nephew of Pro Football Hall of Fame quarterback Jim Kelly, Chad transferred into Ole Miss last year and turned a questionable position for the Rebels into a strength. The former Clemson signal-caller set 14 Ole Miss records, including total yards (4,542), passing touchdowns (31) and passing yards (4,042), the third most in SEC history.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB **Chad Kelly**

Despite a 2015 regular season that saw him lead the SEC in passing, total offense and passing touchdowns—plus a stellar Sugar Bowl where he tied an all-time record for touchdown passes in the game—the 6-2, 215-pound senior from Buffalo, N.Y., is returning for his final year with the Rebels and delaying his entry into the NFL. The nephew of NFL Hall-of-Famer Jim Kelly finished 2015 as one of 10 Manning Award finalists for the best quarterback in the nation. He was responsible for 246 points by the Ole Miss offense (tops in the SEC) and ranked among the top 20 nationally for passing efficiency (155.9), completion percentage (65.1), completions per game (22.9) and yards per pass attempt (8.83). A former Clemson player who led East Mississippi Community College to the national junior-college championship in 2014, Kelly put together the most wins by a first-year starter (10) at Ole Miss since Jake Gibbs in 1959.

"I couldn't be more pleased with what Chad has done on the field and off the field," says Freeze, referencing Kelly's checkered disciplinary past. "He continues to seek how to be the type of man that he wants to be

KELLY: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP

known for. We refer to it as 'rewriting your story or writing the end of your story.' He is on track to finish well."

The only cloud of concern for Kelly was sports-hernia surgery in early April that forced him to miss the latter part of spring practice, though a full recovery for August was expected. Redshirt freshman Jason Pellerin and highly recruited freshman Shea Patterson split time in Kelly's absence.

The Rebels return only three other offensive starters. Of those, only one–wide receiver Quincy Adeboyejo (38 catches, 604 yards, 7 touchdowns)–returns at a skill position. Damore'ea Stringfellow (36, 503, 5) and Markell Pack (31, 380, 3) will have to help the Rebels fill the void left vacant by Laquon Treadwell's early departure to the NFL.

Fortunately for Ole Miss, tight end Evan Engram (38 catches, 464 yards, 2 touchdowns) is back for his senior campaign. Kelly (500 yards, 10 touchdowns) is actually the Rebels' top returning rusher, but when he does hand off it will be to senior Akeem Judd (421, 3) and junior Jordan Wilkins (379, 4).

On the offensive line, only right guard Jordan Sims is a returning starter. Ole Miss' offensive success may hinge on the ability of highly touted freshman Greg Little to fill Laremy Tunsil's cleats at left tackle.

For the first time under Freeze, the Rebels' defense will go into the season without anyone named Nkemdiche on the roster.

Robert Nkemdiche left early for the NFL Draft, leaving D.J. Jones and Breeland Speaks to replace him at defensive tackle (Jones had five tackles with a sack in the Sugar Bowl). Terry Caldwell (32 tackles) replaces Denzel Nkemdiche at middle linebacker. A big boost to the secondary will be the return of nickel back Tony Conner, who missed eight games after suffering a knee injury against Alabama.

Kicker Gary Wunderlich and punter Will Gleeson both return. Wunderlich (19-of-25 field goals, 63-of-63 PATs) took over punting duties late and averaged 46.9 yards per boot, but hopes are high Gleeson (40.7 yards per punt) will return to form.

Ole Miss opens with Florida State on Sept. 5 in Orlando, then hosts Alabama 12 days later in Oxford. A huge October road test follows with back-to-back games at Arkansas and LSU.

It will be difficult for Ole Miss to continue its one-win-a-year improvement under Freeze. But if the Rebels can, they may be able to finally cross an SEC Championship Game appearance off their bucket list.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Rebels' recruiting on the offensive side of the ball was a grand slam. Ole Miss added the nation's top quarterback, Shea Patterson, and the nation's top offensive tackle, Greg Little, plus two top in-state receivers in A.J. Brown and D.K. Metcalf. The defensive side of the ball certainly was not neglected by the Rebels, either, as they landed five-star defensive tackle Benito Jones and the nation's No. 2 safety, Deontay Anderson. The 2016 class, which ranked No. 6 in the nation, was another great example of coach Hugh Freeze's recruiting acumen.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATINGS

1. **Shea Patterson,** QB ★★★★★
2. **Greg Little,** OT ★★★★★
3. **Benito Jones,** DT ★★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Chad Kelly	GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
	13	155.9	298-458-13	65.1	4042	31	310.9

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Chad Kelly	13	107	500	4.7	10	38.5

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Quincy Adeboyejo	13	38	604	15.9	7	46.5

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
DeMarquis Gates	13	46	30	76

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Marquis Haynes	13	10.0	76

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Tony Bridges	3	46	15.3	1

TEAM TRADITION

Tailgating at Ole Miss is different than everywhere else. That's because the Rebels gather in The Grove, a 10-acre grassy plot located in the center of campus. Magnificent oak, elm and magnolia trees surround the area, providing shade for the nearly 25,000 tailgaters that gather together to enjoy what *Sporting News* deemed "the Holy Grail of tailgating sites."

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	MISS	OPP
SCORING	531	294
Points Per Game	40.8	22.6
FIRST DOWNS	341	278
Rushing	131	99
Passing	182	157
Penalty	28	22
RUSHING YARDAGE	2380	1652
Yards gained rushing	2700	2028
Yards lost rushing	320	376
Rushing Attempts	463	496
Average Per Rush	5.1	3.3
Average Per Game	183.1	127.1
TDs Rushing	29	9
PASSING YARDAGE	4351	3364
Comp-Att-Int	318-489-14	319-533-15
Average Per Pass	8.9	6.3
Average Per Catch	13.7	10.5
Average Per Game	334.7	258.8
TDs Passing	35	23
TOTAL OFFENSE	6731	5016
Total Plays	952	1029
Average Per Play	7.1	4.9
Average Per Game	517.8	385.8
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	34-602	40-765
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	30-112	18-107
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	15-356	14-188
KICK RETURN AVG.	17.7	19.1
PUNT RETURN AVG.	3.7	5.9
INT RETURN AVG.	23.7	13.4
FUMBLES-LOST	26-9	25-8
PENALTIES-YARDS	79-702	87-695
Average Per Game	54.0	53.5
PUNTS-YARDS	52-2170	75-3133
Average Per Punt	41.7	41.8
Net punt average	39.3	39.7
TIME OF POSS./GAME	26:32	33:28
3RD-DOWN CONV.	70/169	88/226
3rd-Down Pct.	41%	39%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	7/15	7/23
4th-Down Pct.	47%	30%
SACKS BY-YARDS	29-197	19-147
MISC. YARDS	0	7
TDS SCORED	68	33
FG-ATTEMPTS	19-25	22-28
ATTENDANCE	423355	474480
Games/Avg Per Game	7/60479	5/80473
Neutral Site Games		1/72117

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
OLE MISS	147	133	137	107	7	531
Opponent	39	86	78	83	8	294

5-YEAR RECORD 36-28

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Chad Kelly** (6-2, 215, Sr.)
	Jason Pellerin (6-4, 229, Fr.)
RB	**Akeem Judd** (5-11, 222, Sr.)
	Jordan Wilkins (6-1, 214, Jr.)
LT	**Greg Little** (6-6, 326, Fr.)
	Talbot Buys (6-8, 310, Sr.)
LG	**Javon Patterson** (6-3, 307, So.)
	Daronte Bouldin (6-5, 327, Jr.)
C	**Robert Conyers** (6-5, 290, Sr.)
	Jacob Feeley (6-2, 273, Sr.)
RG	**Jordan Sims** (6-4, 334, So.)
	Rod Taylor (6-3, 320, Jr.)
RT	**Sean Rawlings** (6-5, 280, So.)
	Alex Givens (6-6, 293, Fr.)
TE	**Evan Engram** (6-3, 227, Sr.)
	Jeremy Liggins (6-3, 302, Sr.)
WR	**Damore'ea Stringfellow** (6-2, 220, Jr.)
	Derrick Jones (6-2, 189, Sr.)
WR	**Quincy Adeboyejo** (6-3, 195, Sr.)
	Van Jefferson (6-2, 181, Fr.)
WR	**Markell Pack** (6-2, 193, Jr.)
	Damarkus Lodge (6-2, 190, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Fadol Brown** (6-4, 280, Sr.)
	Victor Evans (6-3, 238, So.)
DT	**D.J. Jones** (6-0, 324, Sr.)
	Issac Gross (6-1, 240, Sr.)
NT	**Breeland Speaks** (6-3, 313, So.)
	Benito Jones (6-1, 285, Fr.)
DE	**Marquis Haynes** (6-3, 220, Jr.)
	John Youngblood (6-3, 255, Sr.)
OLB	**DeMarquis Gates** (6-2, 217, Jr.)
	Tayler Polk (5-11, 212, Jr.)
MLB	**Terry Caldwell** (6-1, 216, Sr.)
	Rommel Mageo (6-2, 233, Jr.)
CB	**Tony Bridges** (6-0, 183, Sr.)
	Carlos Davis (5-8, 171, Sr.)
CB	**Kendarius Webster** (5-11, 180, Jr.)
	Kailo Moore (5-10, 195, Sr.)
FS	**C.J. Hampton** (6-0, 179, Jr.)
	Deontay Anderson (6-1, 212, Fr.)
SS	**Zedrick Woods** (5-11, 197, So.)
	Montrell Custis (6-0, 174, Fr.)
S	**Tony Conner** (6-0, 215, Sr.)
	A.J. Moore (6-0, 199, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Gary Wunderlich** (6-0, 188, Jr.)
P	**Will Gleeson** (6-3, 197, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

LSU TIGERS

3

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

12
SportingNews
2016 NATIONAL RANK

Brandon Harris

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Wisconsin*	
S.10	Jacksonville State	
S.17	Mississippi State	21-19
S.24	@AUBURN	45-21
O.1	Missouri	
O.8	@FLORIDA	35-28
O.15	Southern Miss	
O.22	Ole Miss	17-38
N.5	Alabama	16-30
N.12	@ARKANSAS	14-31
N.19	South Alabama	
N.24	@TEXAS A&M	19-7

At Green Bay, WI

COACH

Les Miles
12th year (112-32)
CAREER RECORD: 140-53

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Cam Cameron (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Dave Aranda (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-3
(Beat Texas Tech in the Texas Bowl, 56-27)
STADIUM: Tiger Stadium (102,321)
TICKETS: 800-960-8587
SITE: Baton Rouge, La.
WEBSITE: lsusports.net
TWITTER: @LSUfball

Les Miles was almost shown the door after a three-game losing streak last November, a coup that was only headed off at the 11th hour when it became politically unviable to pay his $12.9 million buyout.

But when all seemed so dark for Miles, he found his way back into the light.

The Tigers beat Texas A&M in the regular-season finale and then throttled Texas Tech in the Texas Bowl. Defensive coordinator Kevin Steele left for the same job at Auburn, so Miles hired Dave Aranda–maybe the top up-and-comer in the college game–away from Wisconsin.

LSU signed one of the nation's top three recruiting classes. Perhaps just as important, Miles "re-recruited" seven juniors who were considering making early jumps to the NFL, losing only starting right tackle Vadal Alexander.

The Tigers have 18 returning starters, raising expectations at LSU higher than they've been since the BCS title-game run in 2011.

Senior defensive tackle Christian LaCouture, one of the returning six, doubles down on the hype.

"Anything less than a national championship is going to be unacceptable," he says. "We have to work toward it, of course, but all the pieces are in place. We should have a special year."

Special starts with junior running back Leonard Fournette.

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB Brandon Harris

We all know what Leonard Fournette can do, and that is why the 2016 season for LSU may rest squarely on the shoulders of junior quarterback Brandon Harris. If he delivers, the Tigers could be a top-five team when the dust settles. After throwing for 2,165 yards and 13 touchdowns last season with only six interceptions, coach Les Miles is expecting the 6-3, 206-pound Bossier City, La., native to make a big jump in production. An offense that scored 32.8 points per game in 2015 was middle-of-the-pack in the SEC. An improved Harris can change that.

Fournette was the Heisman Trophy front-runner most of the 2015 season until the three straight losses derailed his chances. Still, Fournette ran for a school record 1,953 yards and 22 touchdowns in 300 attempts, becoming the first SEC back to lead the nation in yards per game rushing (162.8) since 1949.

The talented tailback corps also includes sophomore Derrius Guice (436 yards, 3 touchdowns) and junior Darrel Williams (296, 4). As solid as LSU is at that position, however,

HARRIS: GERALD HERBERT / AP

that's how shaky the Tigers are at quarterback.

The good news is Brandon Harris returns for his junior year after starting all 12 games in 2015. One could argue that's bad news, too. Harris completed 149 of 277 passes for 2,165 yards with 13 touchdowns and six interceptions as the Tigers struggled to get airborne. LSU averaged just 180.4 yards per game passing, ranking 105th of 127 FBS teams, prompting a duel in the spring between Harris and Purdue transfer Danny Etling. Former starter Anthony Jennings has left the program.

Miles' love for the running game remains as passionate as ever, but even he admits it's time for LSU to inject more modern passing tactics into its offense. The Tigers possess exciting targets–junior Malachi Dupre returns at wide receiver, as does senior Travin Dural (missed the spring with a hamstring injury)–but has lacked the will to throw it more often. Dupre led LSU with just 58.2 yards per game receiving in 2015. New wide receivers coach Dameyune Craig is also expected to help drag LSU's offense outside the box.

Aranda's defense at Wisconsin led the FBS in points per game allowed (13.7) and was second in yards per game allowed (268.5). Now he gets a unit loaded with the kind of athletes he never had in Madison.

Aranda's style is best described as "multiple." LSU has been a predominant 4-3 defense since the 1980s but will also use 3-4 formations with LaCouture at nose and players like Arden Key lining up as a standup rush end at times.

Senior middle linebacker Kendell Beckwith's return was an enormous boost for a position group that is shockingly thin. The secondary is deep and typically talented befitting the school that calls itself "DBU," led by potential first-round draft picks Jamal Adams at safety and Tre'Davious White at cornerback.

Placekicker Trent Domingue returns after a serviceable junior season (13-of-17 field goals, 49-of-50 PATs). Freshman Josh Growden is the latest in a string of Australian LSU punters.

With a wealth of returning starters including a Heisman favorite, and a schedule that includes home games with Alabama and Ole Miss, LSU's expectations are justifiably high. The only thing holding the Tigers back may be their ability and Miles' willingness to pass more. If LSU can temper the predictability of what will always be a run-oriented offense, and Aranda's defense comes close to his level of success at Wisconsin, the Tigers will be a bona fide championship contender.

If not, Miles may find himself in survivor mode again.

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Tigers were phenomenal on the recruiting trail in their home state this past recruiting cycle. They inked nine of the top 10 prospects in the state of Louisiana. The top player in the state, five-star cornerback Kristian Fulton, was the final piece to LSU's top-ranked secondary class, which also included top-50 prospects Saivion Smith and Eric Monroe. The Tigers also signed a stellar group of defensive linemen that was led by five-star tackle Rashard Lawrence and included tackle Edwin Alexander and end Rahssan Thornton. Overall, LSU finished with the No. 3 class in the nation.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1. **Kristian Fulton,** CB ★★★★★
2. **Rashard Lawrence,** DT ★★★★★
3. **Saivion Smith,** CB ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

Brandon Harris

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
12	130.6	149-277-6	53.8	2165	13	180.4

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Leonard Fournette	12	300	1953	6.5	22	162.8

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Malachi Dupre	12	43	698	16.2	6	58.2

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Kendell Beckwith	12	50	34	84

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
Lewis Neal	12	8.0	50

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Jamal Adams	4	30	7.5	0

TEAM TRADITION

Playing night games at Tiger Stadium dates all the way back to Oct. 3, 1931, a 35-0 victory over Spring Hill. A few of the reasons cited were avoiding scheduling conflicts with Tulane as well as dodging the heat and humidity of afternoon games. Night games are so ingrained at LSU that public address announcer Dan Borne wrote the narrative that is played prior to each home game with the accompanying video. The title? "It's Saturday Night in Death Valley."

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	LSU	OPP
SCORING	394	291
Points Per Game	32.8	24.2
FIRST DOWNS	246	233
Rushing	140	89
Passing	85	127
Penalty	21	17
RUSHING YARDAGE	3082	1475
Yards gained rushing	3363	1830
Yards lost rushing	281	355
Rushing Attempts	505	387
Average Per Rush	6.1	3.8
Average Per Game	256.8	122.9
TDs Rushing	36	14
PASSING YARDAGE	2165	2691
Comp-Att-Int	149-278-6	236-419-10
Average Per Pass	7.8	6.4
Average Per Catch	14.5	11.4
Average Per Game	180.4	224.2
TDs Passing	13	22
TOTAL OFFENSE	5247	4166
Total Plays	783	806
Average Per Play	6.7	5.2
Average Per Game	437.2	347.2
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	35-714	56-1140
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	24-235	11-208
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	10-77	6-63
KICK RETURN AVG.	20.4	20.4
PUNT RETURN AVG.	9.8	18.9
INT RETURN AVG.	7.7	10.5
FUMBLES-LOST	16-4	20-7
PENALTIES-YARDS	96-774	73-610
Average Per Game	64.5	50.8
PUNTS-YARDS	58-2359	64-2826
Average Per Punt	40.7	44.2
Net punt average	35.4	38.9
TIME OF POSS./GAME	31:20	28:40
3RD-DOWN CONV.	59/148	60/168
3rd-Down Pct.	40%	36%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/9	12/26
4th-Down Pct.	56%	46%
SACKS BY-YARDS	34-236	17-119
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	51	38
FG-ATTEMPTS	13-17	9-13
ATTENDANCE	654084	268158
Games/Avg Per Game	7/93441	4/67040
Neutral Site Games		1/71307

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
LSU	83	92	134	85	0	394
Opponent	33	96	104	58	0	291

5-YEAR RECORD 50-15

WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**Brandon Harris** (6-3, 206, Jr.)
	Danny Etling (6-3, 226, Jr.)
FB	**J.D. Moore** (6-4, 235, Jr.)
	Bry'Kiethon Mouton (6-1, 255, So.)
RB	**Leonard Fournette** (6-1, 230, Jr.)
	Derrius Guice (5-11, 222, So.)
LT	**Maea Teuhema** (6-5, 327, So.)
	Chidi Okeke (6-6, 311. Fr.)
LG	**William Clapp** (6-5, 303, So.)
	K.J. Malone (6-4, 298, Jr.)
C	**Ethan Pocic** (6-7, 309, Sr.)
	Andy Dodd (6-4, 319, Jr.)
RG	**Josh Boutte** (6-5, 342, Sr.)
	Garrett Brumfield (6-3, 294, So.)
RT	**Toby Weathersby** (6-5, 292, So.)
	George Brown Jr. (6-7, 283, Fr.)
TE	**Colin Jeter** (6-7, 244, Sr.)
	Foster Moreau (6-5, 261, So.)
WR	**Travin Dural** (6-2, 203, Sr.)
	D.J. Chark (6-3, 186, Jr.)
WR	**Malachi Dupre** (6-3, 190, Jr.)
	Tyron Johnson (6-1, 189, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Lewis Neal** (6-2, 264, Sr.)
	Sione Teuhema (6-4, 251, Jr.)
DT	**Davon Godchaux** (6-4, 293, Jr.)
	Frank Herron (6-4, 289, Jr.)
NT	**Christian LaCouture** (6-5, 307, Sr.)
	Greg Gilmore (6-4, 313, Jr.)
DE	**Arden Key** (6-6, 231, So.)
	Tashawn Bower (6-5, 240, Sr.)
OLB	**Corey Thompson** (6-2, 221, Sr.)
	Duke Riley (6-0, 227, Sr.)
ILB	**Kendell Beckwith** (6-2, 252, Sr.)
	Devin White (6-1, 255, Fr.)
ILB	**Donnie Alexander** (6-1, 215, Jr.)
	Devin Voorhies (6-1, 216, Jr.)
CB	**Tre'Davious White** (5-11, 191, Sr.)
	Donte Jackson (5-11, 167, So.)
CB	**Kevin Toliver II** (6-2, 196, So.)
	Ed Paris (6-1, 210, Jr.)
FS	**Rickey Jefferson** (6-0, 206, Sr.)
	John Battle (6-1, 194, Jr.)
SS	**Jamal Adams** (6-1, 211, Jr.)
	Xavier Lewis (6-0, 193, Fr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Trent Domingue** (6-2, 170, Sr.)
P	**Josh Growden** (6-2, 197, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

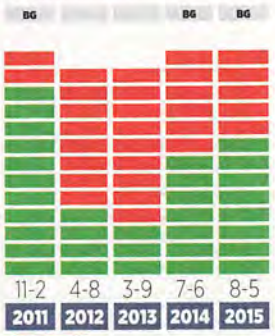
ARKANSAS
RAZORBACKS

23
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

4
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

RB Kody Walker

5-YEAR RECORD
33-30



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Louisiana Tech	
S.10	@TCU	
S.17	Texas State	
S.24	Texas A&M*	21-28
O.1	Alcorn State**	
O.8	Alabama	14-27
O.15	Ole Miss	53-52
O.22	@AUBURN	54-46
N.5	Florida	
N.12	LSU	31-14
N.19	@MISSISSIPPI ST.	50-51
N.26	@MISSOURI	28-3

*At Arlington, TX
**At Little Rock, AR

COACH
Bret Bielema
Fourth year (18-20)
CAREER RECORD: 86-44

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Dan Enos (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Robb Smith (third year)

FAST FACTS
2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Beat Kansas State in the Liberty Bowl, 45-23)
STADIUM: Donald W. Reynolds Razorback Stadium (72,000) and War Memorial Stadium (54,120)
TICKETS: 800-982-4647
SITE: Fayetteville, Ark.
WEBSITE: arkansasrazorbacks.com
TWITTER: @RazorbackFB

Bret Bielema spent part of his offseason visiting Clemson and Baylor, trying to learn what makes those two championship programs tick while seeing what he could use to improve his team back in Arkansas.

He already has the Razorbacks on the right track, having built some impressive momentum over the last two seasons.

Arkansas went 7-6 in 2014, finishing big with wins in three of its last four games. The Razorbacks were 8-5 last year, shaking off a 2-4 start with a 6-1 second half.

Everything about Arkansas says it's a program on the rise. But the Razorbacks face some strong headwinds going into 2016, particularly on offense.

The name on the back of the quarterback's jersey still says "Allen," but it's junior Austin Allen who's now running the show. He replaces older brother Brandon after the latter turned in a superb senior campaign, throwing for 3,440 yards and 30 touchdowns. Austin has completed just nine of 19 collegiate passes for 188 yards and one score.

"Austin really wants to take the next step," says Bielema, who is entering his fourth season. "It's going to be fun to watch him go out there."

Sophomore Rafe Peavey is in the mix should Allen falter.

The quarterback question isn't the only one the Razorbacks have to answer.

Arkansas lost its top running back, Alex Collins, to early NFL Draft entry and must find a way to replace the 1,577 rushing yards and 20 touchdowns he produced last season. Kody Walker (394 rushing yards, 6 TDs in 2015) is atop the depth chart entering August. Jeremy Sprinkle (27 catches, 389 yards, 6 TDs) is a capable replacement for talented tight end Hunter Henry, who left early for the NFL. The Hogs must also replace three starters on the offensive line, though towering 6-10 right tackle Dan Skipper should earn All-SEC honors.

There is strength on defense—or at least the potential for it. Arkansas returns nine starters from a feast-or-famine unit that was stingy against the run (116.5 yards per game) but porous against the pass (275.2).

The defensive front is the bedrock, led by tackle Jeremiah Ledbetter (55 tackles) and Deatrich Wise Jr. (31 tackles, 8 sacks) at end. The linebackers are an active group with the Razorbacks' top two tacklers from last year returning: middle linebacker Brooks Ellis (102 stops), a three-year starter, and sophomore Dre Greenlaw (95). Cornerback DJ Dean (35 tackles, 2 interceptions) missed the spring with foot surgery but will be ready in August. Santos Ramirez (35 tackles) takes over for Rohan Gaines at strong safety, the only other defensive starting role to fill.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Austin Allen (6-1, 208, Jr.)
FB	Chris Jones (5-11, 248, Jr.)
RB	Kody Walker (6-2, 251, Sr.)
LT	Brian Wallace (6-6, 326, So.)
LG	Hjalte Froholdt (6-4, 309, So.)
C	Frank Ragnow (6-5, 314, Jr.)
RG	Johnny Gibson (6-4, 343, So.)
RT	Dan Skipper (6-10, 326, Sr.)
TE	Jeremy Sprinkle (6-6, 255, Sr.)
WR	Drew Morgan (6-0, 195, Sr.)
WR	Dominique Reed (6-3, 175, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Tevin Beanum (6-4, 270, Jr.)
NG	Taiwan Johnson (6-2, 287, Sr.)
DT	Jeremiah Ledbetter (6-3, 276, Sr.)
DE	Deatrich Wise Jr. (6-5, 280, Sr.)
OLB	Dre Greenlaw (6-0, 231, So.)
MLB	Brooks Ellis (6-2, 248, Sr.)
OLB	Randy Ramsey (6-4, 230, So.)
CB	Jared Collins (5-11, 172, Sr.)
CB	DJ Dean (5-11, 195, Sr.)
FS	Josh Liddell (6-1, 210, Jr.)
SS	Santos Ramirez (6-2, 201, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Cole Hedlund (5-10, 165, So.)
P	Toby Baker (6-3, 212, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. McTelvin Agim, DE ★★★★★
2. Devwah Whaley, RB ★★★★
3. Austin Capps, DT ★★★★

The ground game for the Razorbacks looks to be in good hands after stealing top-100 running back Devwah Whaley out of the state of Texas. However, it's five-star defensive end McTelvin Agim who might make the quickest impact on the field for Arkansas. The Razorbacks landed the top four prospects in Arkansas this past recruiting cycle.

WALKER: MARK HUMPHREY / AP

AUBURN
TIGERS

5-YEAR RECORD
38-27

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

RB Jovon Robinson

After coming within seconds of claiming the last BCS title three Januarys ago, the Tigers have gone a combined 15-11. Last season, Auburn was the pick to win the SEC West and opened at No. 6 in the country, but barely eked out a winning record at 7-6.

Figuring which way the winds of fortune will blow at Auburn is always a game of chance. Since 2004, Auburn has had four seasons of 11 wins or better, including the 2010 national championship. But during that same span, the Tigers have had six seasons of five losses or more.

Another five-loss season could cost coach Gus Malzahn, once hailed as Auburn's savior, his job. But for now, he's striking a defiant tone as he speaks of his players entering 2016.

"You can tell they've got a chip on their shoulder from last year, which I think is very healthy," Malzahn says. "They are looking forward to getting out there and redeeming themselves."

The Tigers return a healthy 14 starters, but who starts at quarterback will be key. It was an even contest in the spring, but Auburn may pin its hopes on junior-college transfer John Franklin III after Jeremy Johnson and Sean White volleyed their way through an indifferent 2015. Though small (6-1, 174 pounds), Franklin possesses the run/pass skills with which Malzahn's best offenses have thrived.

Jovon Robinson returns at tailback after rushing for 639 yards and three touchdowns in just eight games last year. The receiver corps is deep, if underwhelming, led by Marcus Davis (30 catches, 181 yards, 1 TD), and was shocked by the sudden departure of receivers coach Dameyune Craig to LSU. The ex-Auburn quarterback was replaced by Kodi Burns. The offensive line, coached by new arrival Herb Hand, is anchored by All-SEC right guard Braden Smith.

Kevin Steele arrived following one season at LSU to coordinate the defense after Will Muschamp became head coach at South Carolina. Steele needs a healthy season from star end Carl Lawson, who had just 17 tackles during an injury-plagued 2015. If the offense does bog down, Auburn can count on All-SEC kicker Daniel Carlson (23-of-27 on field goals, 40-of-40 extra points).

The schedule begins with a Sept. 3 home game against College Football Playoff runner-up Clemson and offers little margin for error. With games against LSU, Ole Miss, Georgia and Alabama, it could be difficult for Malzahn to get the eight or nine wins he needs to save his job unless the quarterback play vastly improves.

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	John Franklin III (6-1, 174, Jr.)
RB	Jovon Robinson (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LT	Robert Leff (6-6, 288, Sr.)
LG	Alex Kozan (6-4, 300, Sr.)
C	Austin Golson (6-5, 304, Jr.)
RG	Braden Smith (6-6, 286, Jr.)
RT	Darius James (6-4, 332, Jr.)
TE	Landon Rice (6-5, 246, Fr.)
WR	Tony Stevens (6-4, 205, Sr.)
WR	Marcus Davis (5-9, 180, Sr.)
WR	Jason Smith (6-1, 180, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Byron Cowart (6-3, 277, So.)
DT	Dontavius Russell (6-3, 295, So.)
DT	Montravius Adams (6-4, 296, Sr.)
DE	Carl Lawson (6-2, 257, Jr.)
OLB	Deshaun Davis (5-11, 236, So.)
MLB	Tre' Williams (6-2, 238, Jr.)
OLB	Darrell Williams (6-2, 234, So.)
CB	Carlton Davis (6-1, 190, So.)
CB	Jamel Dean (6-2, 205, Fr.)
S	Johnathan Ford (6-0, 203, Sr.)
S	Tray Matthews (6-1, 213, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Daniel Carlson (6-4, 213, Jr.)
P	Kevin Phillips (6-0, 185, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1 **Derrick Brown,** DT ★★★★★
2 **Marlon Davidson,** DE ★★★★
3 **Nate Craig-Myers,** WR ★★★★

The Tigers' haul of defensive linemen was outstanding with the additions of five-star tackle Derrick Brown as well as top-50 line recruits Marlon Davidson and Antwuan Jackson. Auburn also landed an outstanding receiver corps led by Kyle Davis, Nate Craig-Myers and Eli Stove.

5
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Clemson	
S.10	Arkansas State	
S.17	Texas A&M	26-10
S.24	LSU	21-45
O.1	Louisiana-Monroe	
O.8	@MISSISSIPPI ST.	9-17
O.22	Arkansas	46-54
O.29	@OLE MISS	19-27
N.5	Vanderbilt	
N.12	@GEORGIA	13-20
N.19	Alabama A&M	
N.26	@ALABAMA	13-29

COACH

Gus Malzahn
Fourth year (27-13)
CAREER RECORD: 36-16

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Rhett Lashlee (fourth year)
Kodi Burns (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kevin Steele (first year)
Wesley McGriff (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 7-6
(Beat Memphis in the Birmingham Bowl, 31-10)
STADIUM: Jordan-Hare Stadium (87,451)
TICKETS: 855-282-2010
SITE: Auburn, Ala.
WEBSITE: auburntigers.com
TWITTER: @FootballAU

ROBINSON: GERALD HERBERT / AP

TEXAS A&M
AGGIES

6

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

WR **Christian Kirk**

Defense used to be the problem at Texas A&M. Lately, it's the offense.

The Aggies improved greatly under first-year defensive coordinator John Chavis, ranking 28th nationally in points allowed (22.0 per game).

Amazingly, the A&M offense didn't outscore the opposition by much. The Aggies' attack ranked a middling 71st in points scored (27.8 per game) and 50th in total offense (424.7 yards per game).

Enter a white Knight, so to speak. Make that a maroon and white Knight.

Trevor Knight took advantage of the NCAA's senior transfer rule to move immediately from Oklahoma into an apparent starting role in Aggieland. Knight threw for 3,424 yards and rushed for 853 more in three seasons with the Sooners, accounting for 33 total touchdowns. He's expected to pair with new offensive coordinator Noel Mazzone (formerly of UCLA and Ole Miss) to bring a Johnny Manziel-like run/pass threat back to the Texas A&M quarterback position.

Mazzone, head coach Kevin Sumlin's fourth offensive coordinator in five seasons, will benefit from working with a talented and experienced crew of wide receivers that returns all four starters. The corps is led by Christian Kirk (80 catches, 1,009 yards, 7 TDs) and Josh Reynolds (51, 907, 5). Another Oklahoma transfer, junior Keith Ford, is expected to get the start at tailback.

Junior defensive end Myles Garrett could be the No. 1 pick in next year's NFL Draft, so that probably means Aaron Wallace's Texas A&M career sack record of 42 is out of the question. Then again, Garrett had 11.5 sacks as a freshman and 12.5 as a sophomore, so nothing and no one is truly out of his reach. In the secondary, free safety Armani Watts (126 tackles) is All-SEC-caliber, but either Josh Walker or junior-college transfer Claude George must fill a weak spot at middle linebacker.

Sumlin has gone only 17-15 in conference play in four seasons and, in the post-Manziel years, is a combined 1-7 against SEC West rivals Alabama, Auburn, LSU and Ole Miss. The simple fact is Texas A&M is paying Sumlin championship money ($5 million per year) and getting mediocre results.

Sumlin's seat figures to be hot, but it could be hotter if the price of oil wasn't so cool. Sumlin's buyout calls for him to be paid about $15 million, but with oil prices down, the pockets of disgruntled alumni who want to buy him out might not be quite so deep. That may buy Sumlin a little more time to pump out a few more wins.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	UCLA	
S.10	Prairie View A&M	
S.17	@AUBURN	10-26
S.24	Arkansas*	28-21
O.1	@SOUTH CAROLINA	35-28
O.8	Tennessee	
O.22	@ALABAMA	23-41
O.29	New Mexico State	
N.5	@MISSISSIPPI ST.	30-17
N.12	Ole Miss	3-23
N.19	UTSA	
N.24	LSU	7-19

At Arlington, TX

COACH

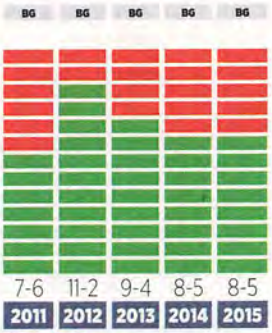
Kevin Sumlin
Fifth year (36-16)
CAREER RECORD: 71-33

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Noel Mazzone (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: John Chavis (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 8-5
(Lost to Louisville in the Music City Bowl, 27-21)
STADIUM: Kyle Field (102,733)
TICKETS: 888-99-AGGIE
SITE: College Station, Texas
WEBSITE: 12thman.com
TWITTER: @AggieFootball

5-YEAR RECORD
43-22



CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Trevor Knight (6-1, 215, Sr.)
RB	Keith Ford (5-11, 215, Jr.)
LT	Avery Gennesy (6-5, 310, Sr.)
LG	Jermaine Eluemunor (6-4, 320, Sr.)
C	Erik McCoy (6-4, 310, Fr.)
RG	Connor Lanfear (6-6, 320, So.)
RT	Keaton Sutherland (6-5, 300, So.)
WR	Speedy Noil (5-11, 192, Jr.)
WR	Ricky Seals-Jones (6-5, 240, Jr.)
WR	Josh Reynolds (6-4, 190, Sr.)
WR	Christian Kirk (5-11, 200, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Myles Garrett (6-5, 262, Jr.)
DT	Daylon Mack (6-1, 335, So.)
DT	Kingsley Keke (6-3, 315, So.)
DE	Daeshon Hall (6-6, 260, Sr.)
OLB	Richard Moore (6-0, 210, So.)
MLB	Josh Walker (6-1, 240, Jr.)
OLB	Otaro Alaka (6-3, 240, So.)
CB	Nick Harvey (5-10, 180, Jr.)
CB	Priest Willis (6-2, 200, Jr.)
FS	Armani Watts (5-11, 200, Jr.)
SS	Justin Evans (6-1, 195, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Daniel LaCamera (6-4, 220, So.)
P	Shane Tripucka (6-3, 215, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

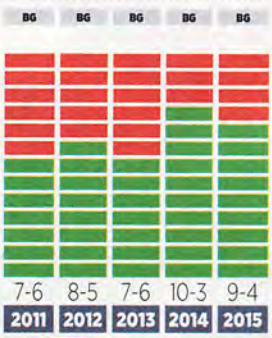
1. **Justin Madubuike,** DE ★★★★
2. **Kellen Diesch,** OT ★★★★
3. **Quartney Davis,** WR ★★★★

It was a rough year at home for the Aggies after they landed only two of the top 20 prospects in the Lone Star State. Four-star defensive end Justin Madubuike was the marquee name A&M was able to land in-state. Overall, the Aggies still signed the nation's No. 18 recruiting class.

KIRK: ROGELIO V. SOLIS / AP

MISSISSIPPI STATE
BULLDOGS

5-YEAR RECORD
41-24



WIN **LOSS**
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Nick Fitzgerald (6-5, 227, So.)
RB	Brandon Holloway (5-8, 165, Sr.)
LT	Justin Senior (6-5, 295, Sr.)
LG	Deion Calhoun (6-3, 303, So.)
C	Jamaal Clayborn (6-4, 315, Sr.)
RG	Devon Desper (6-4, 305, Sr.)
RT	Martinas Rankin (6-5, 302, Jr.)
TE	Justin Johnson (6-3, 229, So.)
WR	Donald Gray (5-10, 193, Jr.)
WR	Fred Ross (6-2, 207, Sr.)
WR	Malik Dear (5-9, 220, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Torrey Dale (6-6, 270, Sr.)
DT	Nick James (6-5, 325, Sr.)
DE	A.J. Jefferson (6-3, 277, Sr.)
OLB	J.T. Gray (6-0, 196, Jr.)
ILB	Richie Brown (6-2, 245, Sr.)
ILB	Gerri Green (6-4, 243, So.)
OLB	Will Coleman (6-5, 250, Sr.)
CB	Tolando Cleveland (6-0, 190, Sr.)
CB	Cedric Jiles (5-10, 182, Sr.)
S	Kivon Coman (6-3, 196, Sr.)
S	Brandon Bryant (5-11, 205, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Westin Graves (6-0, 163, Jr.)
P	Logan Cooke (6-5, 216, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Jeffery Simmons,** DE ★★★★★
2. **Marquiss Spencer,** DE ★★★★
3. **Kobe Jones,** DT ★★★★

The Bulldogs also lost out on a couple of important in-state recruiting battles, which led to the extremely small 18-man class. The defensive-line class Mississippi State was able to land was the highlight, led by five-star end Jeffery Simmons, four-star end Marquiss Spencer and four-star tackle Kobe Jones.

WR **Fred Ross**

ROSS: LG PATTERSON / AP

Everyone knew replacing the best quarterback in Mississippi State history would be a tough task.

But separating the contenders for Dak Prescott's old job proved to be so difficult that during one spring session the top three healthy candidates–Damian Williams, Nick Fitzgerald and Nick Tiano–ended up having their practice order determined by their GPA.

"Without Dak," MSU coach Dan Mullen says, "obviously it's a little different."

One thing hasn't changed: Even with Prescott returning for his senior season in 2015, the Bulldogs were picked to finish last in the SEC West. Without him, that hasn't changed.

State ended up defying the predictions last year and turned in a respectable 9-4 campaign. Paired with 2014's 10-3 record–which included a No. 1 ranking in the inaugural College Football Playoff poll–the 19 wins are the most in back-to-back seasons in school history.

The inside track to the starting quarterback job belongs to Fitzgerald, who knows he has to grow into the role.

"When I first got here I was kind of a flight risk," jokes the sophomore from Georgia, who completed 11 of 14 passes for 235 yards and three touchdowns in 2015. "I was bailing out at any sign of pressure. Now I am a lot more comfortable. I just want to get the ball down the field and into my playmakers' hands."

Playmaker No. 1 is senior receiver Fred Ross, who missed the entire spring recovering from groin surgery. A preseason All-SEC pick, Ross had 88 catches for 1,007 yards and five TDs last season.

Tailback Brandon Holloway was actually State's second-leading rusher behind Prescott last season with 413 net yards. Up front, Justin Senior moves from right tackle to left, making room at right for Martinas Rankin, the No. 1 junior-college offensive tackle last year.

The departure of defensive coordinator Manny Diaz for Mark Richt's new staff at Miami led to a complete coaching turnover on that side of the ball. The new coordinator is former USC linebackers coach Peter Sirmon, who's looking to push the Bulldogs out of a base 4-3 into a multiple look with 3-4 tendencies.

A.J. Jefferson, who had 13.5 tackles for loss last season, anchors the line at one end spot, while inside linebacker Richie Brown is back after finishing fifth in the SEC in tackles (109). Both starting cornerbacks from preseason 2015 are gone, but Tolando Cleveland (who had 42 tackles starting in both spots) returns. So does safety Kivon Coman (76 tackles).

7
PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	South Alabama	
S.10	South Carolina	
S.17	@LSU	19-21
S.24	@MASSACHUSETTS*	
O.8	Auburn	17-9
O.14	@BYU	
O.22	@KENTUCKY	42-16
O.29	Samford	
N.5	Texas A&M	17-30
N.12	@ALABAMA	6-31
N.19	Arkansas	51-50
N.26	@OLE MISS	27-38

At Foxboro, MA

COACH

Dan Mullen
Eighth year (55-35)
CAREER RECORD: 55-35

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Billy Gonzales (third year)
John Hevesy (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Peter Sirmon (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat N.C. State in the Belk Bowl, 51-28)
STADIUM: Davis Wade Stadium (61,337)
TICKETS: 888-GO-DAWGS
SITE: Starkville, Miss.
WEBSITE: hailstate.com
TWITTER: @HailStateFB

SUN BELT CONFERENCE

PROJECTED FINISH

1. **Appalachian State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: New Orleans Bowl
2. **Georgia Southern**
   BOWL PROJECTION: GoDaddy Bowl
3. **Arkansas State**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Camellia Bowl
4. **Troy**
   BOWL PROJECTION: Cure Bowl
5. **Louisiana**
6. **Georgia State**
7. **Idaho**
8. **South Alabama**
9. **New Mexico State**
10. **Texas State**
11. **Louisiana-Monroe**

Robert Davis, WR, Georgia State

Appalachian State coach **Scott Satterfield**

Ex-FCS members have announced their presence with authority in SBC

BY TIM BUCKLEY
The Daily Advertiser (Lafayette, La.)

Two recent FCS programs have made waves since joining the Sun Belt, shaking a league whose frequent membership changes still aren't finished.

Georgia Southern went 8-0 in conference play in 2014, then backed that up at 6-2 in SBC games last season.

Appalachian State was 6-2 against Sun Belt opponents in 2014–the first year in the league for it and fellow former FCS power Georgia Southern–then went 7-1 in 2015 with only a loss to conference champion Arkansas State.

Both teams went bowling last year in their first FBS season eligible to do so, with Appalachian State defeating Ohio in the Camellia Bowl and Georgia Southern beating Bowling Green in the GoDaddy Bowl.

They were among four SBC schools in the 2015 postseason, with Arkansas State losing in the New Orleans Bowl and Georgia State falling short in the Cure Bowl.

Both Appalachian State and Georgia Southern should again be in the thick of the title chase, along with Arkansas State.

And now the Sun Belt is preparing to embrace a new member promoted from the FCS: Coastal Carolina, which will join for other sports in the 2016-17 school year but not until 2017 for football.

With the NCAA eliminating the rule requiring conferences to have 12 teams in order to stage a championship game, the Sun Belt also elected to downsize.

Football-only members Idaho and New Mexico State were voted off the island. Both will stay this year and in 2017. But with neither fitting the Sun Belt's geographic footprint, they're out after that, leaving them to ponder dropping to the FCS level (the Big Sky would welcome back Idaho with open arms), playing an independent schedule starting in 2018 or somehow trying to land an FBS home elsewhere.

So the SBC will have 11 teams this year and 12 in 2017, then go to 10 for football in 2018.

Among the 10 is Louisiana, which because of an ACT-related NCAA recruiting investigation has–among other sanctions–vacated two of its four New Orleans Bowl wins since 2011. The Ragin' Cajuns, however, didn't receive a bowl ban.

SATTERFIELD: RICHARD SHIRO / AP; DAVIS: ANDREW SNOOK / ICON SMI

TRENDING
THREE STORIES TO WATCH

1 **Bowling alley:** The SBC had four 2015 bowl-eligible teams (Arkansas State, Appalachian State, Georgia State, Georgia Southern). Can it return to seven, like in 2013?

2016 RECRUITING RANKINGS

by Chad Carson, 247Sports

247SPORTS COMPOSITE

RK.	SCHOOL	TOTAL PLAYERS	★★★★★ 5-STAR RECRUITS	★★★★ 4-STAR RECRUITS	★★★ 3-STAR RECRUITS	PTS.
1	Georgia Southern	27	0	0	15	153.51
2	Troy	29	0	0	8	131.94
3	Arkansas State	20	0	0	7	128.63
4	South Alabama	23	0	0	7	123.05
5	Louisiana	23	0	0	6	116.53
6	Texas State	24	0	0	8	115.96
7	Louisana-Monroe	19	0	0	5	107.09
8	Appalachian State	23	0	0	3	106.72
9	Georgia State	20	0	0	3	99.15
10	Idaho	27	0	0	4	98.37
11	New Mexico State	20	0	0	3	96.63

ALL-SUN BELT

OFFENSE

- QB **Taylor Lamb,** Jr., Appalachian State
- RB **Matt Breida,** Sr., Georgia Southern
- RB **Larry Rose III,** Jr., New Mexico State
- OL **Jemar Clark,** Sr., Arkansas State
- OL **Parker Collins,** Sr., Appalachian State
- OL **Colton Jackson,** Sr., Arkansas State
- OL **Andy Kwon,** Sr., Georgia Southern
- OL **Antonio Garcia,** Sr., Troy
- TE **Gerald Everett,** Sr., South Alabama
- WR **Robert Davis,** Sr., Georgia State
- WR **Penny Hart,** So., Georgia State

DEFENSE

- DL **Bernard Dawson,** Sr., Georgia Southern
- DL **Jay Ellison,** Sr., Georgia Southern
- DL **Ja'Von Rolland-Jones,** Jr., Arkansas State
- LB **Eric Boggs,** Jr., Appalachian State
- LB **John Law,** Sr., Appalachian State
- LB **Otha Peters,** Sr., Louisiana
- LB **Xavier Woodson-Luster,** Sr., Arkansas State
- DB **Cody Brown,** Sr., Arkansas State
- DB **Savion Brown,** Sr., Louisiana
- DB **Latrell Gibbs,** Jr., Appalachian State
- DB **Jeremy Reaves,** Jr., South Alabama

SPECIALISTS

- K **Aleem Sunanon,** Sr., South Alabama
- P **Austin Rehkow,** Sr., Idaho

MCGUIRE: DAVID STEPHENSON / AP

NEWSMAKER

Louisiana running back **Elijah McGuire**, 2014 SBC Player of the Year, missed three weeks of spring practice playing with the Ragin' Cajuns basketball team. If he rebounds from subpar 2015 production and rediscovers sophomore-season form, helping the Cajuns bounce back from a 4-8 season, his hoops career becomes old news.

OVERRATED

NEW MEXICO STATE

Some suspect the Aggies are poised for a big turnaround. After going 1-11, 2-10, 2-10 and 3-9 since 2012, NMSU must do it before it's believable.

UNDERRATED

IDAHO

If quarterback Matt Linehan can live up to his highly hyped billing in 2016, the Vandals perhaps can build on their 4-8 record from 2015.

2 String snapped: Louisiana enjoyed four straight 9-4 seasons from 2011-14, then went 4-8 in 2015. Will 2016 be more like the former or the latter?

3 Still streaking: Arkansas State has been to five consecutive bowl games. Do the Red Wolves have what it takes for six in a row?

RATING THE SUN BELT

FASTEST RECEIVER
Cameron Echols-Luper, Arkansas State
The transfer from TCU has All-America track credentials as a sprint-relay runner and a long jumper.

BEST HANDS
Robert Davis, WR, Georgia State
The NFL prospect had 61 receptions for 980 yards and six TDs in '15—and has at least one catch in 37 straight games.

BEST PASSING QB
Matt Linehan, Idaho
The son of ex-St. Louis Rams head coach Scott Linehan is the SBC's top returning passer by yardage at 2,972, completion percentage (63.1) and yards per game (270.2).

BEST RUNNING QB
Kevin Ellison, Georgia Southern
With 114 carries for 712 yards (6.2 yards per carry) and eight TDs, Ellison was the SBC's No. 10 rusher in 2015.

MOST ELUSIVE RB
Larry Rose III, New Mexico State
Rose led the Sun Belt in rushing last year with a school-record 1,647 yards, including three 200-yard games.

BEST ATHLETE
Josh Magee, WR, South Alabama
Ex-MLB outfielder Wendell Magee's son played two years in the Houston Astros' system before switching to football.

BEST UNDER PRESSURE
Brandon Silvers, QB, Troy
Silvers was 202-for-330 (61.2 percent) for 2,378 yards with 20 TDs and only seven interceptions in 2015.

TOP NFL PROSPECT
Elijah McGuire, RB, Louisiana
The Sun Belt's 2014 Player of the Year is ranked by NFL-DraftScout.com as the No. 9 tailback prospect for 2017.

TOP FRESHMAN
Riley Cole, LB/LS, South Alabama
Cole was committed to Alabama, but when the Tide tried to grayshirt him, he signed with the Jags.

TOP TRANSFER
Darrell Songy, LB, South Alabama
Songy played in 12 games for Oregon State in 2013 and had 11.5 tackles for loss in the Kansas juco ranks last year.

HARDEST HITTER
Ironhead Gallon, LB, Georgia Southern
Somebody knew what they were doing when they nicknamed Deshawntee Gallon as a kid, because the 5-10, 210-pound linebacker (81 tackles in '15) packs a wallop.

BIGGEST OVERACHIEVER
Penny Hart, WR, Georgia State
Despite hailing from a 1A private school and having no other scholarship offers, the 5-8 Hart was the Sun Belt Freshman of the Year with 71 catches for 1,099 yards.

BEST INTERVIEW
Jeremy Reaves, CB, South Alabama
Reaves gives thoughtful answers to reporters' questions.

BEST COACH
Scott Satterfield, Appalachian State
With a 13-3 SBC record, he is highly regarded leaguewide.

COORDINATOR TO WATCH
Jorge Munoz, Louisiana
The ex-Ragin' Cajuns receivers coach takes over as offensive coordinator in place of Jay Johnson, who left after five years for the same post at the University of Minnesota.

HOTTEST SEAT
Doug Martin, New Mexico State
He's 7-29 in three seasons at Las Cruces.

LOUDEST STADIUM
Cajun Field, Louisiana
The field is set two feet below sea level in a natural bowl that tends to ratchet the noise at the 45-year-old stadium.

TOP SCHOLAR
Aleem Sunanon, K, South Alabama
He already has his B.A., is pursuing a master's (Health Administration) and sits on a bowl-eligibility committee.

APPALACHIAN STATE
MOUNTAINEERS

1

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

QB Taylor Lamb

They went 11-2 and beat Ohio in the Camellia Bowl last season, becoming the first team ever to win 11 games and a bowl game in its first full-fledged FBS season.

Suffice it to stay 2015 was mostly kind to the Appalachian State Mountaineers, whose only losses came in September at Clemson and in November to Arkansas State, costing them a Sun Belt Conference championship.

The next step is to win that SBC league title, and coach Scott Satterfield's Mountaineers could have what it takes to fend off Georgia Southern, defending champ Arkansas State and the rest of the SBC hopefuls.

It starts at quarterback, where Appalachian State has a real-deal junior. Taylor Lamb is the total package, with smarts, calmness and an arm. The son of current FCS Mercer head coach and ex-Furman coach Bobby Lamb, he threw for a school-record 31 touchdowns and 2,387 yards as a sophomore. He was also picked off just nine times, finishing 10th nationally with a 160.7 pass-efficiency rating.

Appalachian State does have holes at receiver with Bobo Beathard, Malachi Jones and Simms McElfresh all gone, but junior Shaedon Meadors should be one of the Sun Belt's top playmakers.

But the Mountaineers' offensive attack is two-pronged, also led by running back Marcus Cox, who rushed for 1,423 yards–including 162 in a Camellia Bowl MVP performance–and nine touchdowns over 12 games as a junior last year to rank 13th nationally in rushing yards per game at 118.6.

Cox has surpassed the 1,000-yard mark in each of his three years in Boone, yet he isn't the only ground threat as Jalin Moore (731 yards) and Terrence Upshaw (442) both return behind a line that is led by starting guard/backup center Parker Collins and anticipates breaking in sophomore Tobias Edge-Campbell as its new starting center.

The biggest loss by far for Appalachian State is defensive end and NFL prospect Ronald Blair, a disruptive sort who had 19.0 tackles for loss last year. But linebackers Eric Boggs (team-high 104 total tackles) and John Law (72 tackles, 9.5 tackles for loss) both return, as does cornerback Latrell Gibbs, who is coming off a seven-interception season.

The Mountaineers also have senior punter Bentlee Critcher, who averaged 43.4 yards per punt last year.

A season opener at Tennessee and a Sept. 17 visit from Miami of the ACC present upset opportunities for an Appalachian State team that on paper appears quite capable of making it through Sun Belt play unscathed.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@TENNESSEE	
S.10	Old Dominion	49-0
S.17	Miami (Fla.)	
S.24	@AKRON	
O.1	Georgia State	37-3
O.12	@LOUISIANA	28-7
O.22	Idaho	47-20
O.27	@GA. SOUTHERN	31-13
N.5	Texas State	
N.12	@TROY	44-41
N.19	Louisiana-Monroe	59-14
N.26	@NEW MEXICO STATE	

COACH

Scott Satterfield
Fourth year (22-15)
CAREER RECORD: 22-15

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Frank Ponce (fourth year)
Shawn Clark (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Nate Woody (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 11-2
(Beat Ohio in the Camellia Bowl, 31-29)
STADIUM: Kidd Brewer Stadium (24,050)
TICKETS: 828-262-2079
SITE: Boone, N.C.
WEBSITE: appstatesports.com
TWITTER: @AppState_FB

5-YEAR RECORD
38-23

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Taylor Lamb (6-2, 200, Jr.)
RB	Marcus Cox (5-10, 200, Sr.)
LT	Beau Nunn (6-4, 305, Jr.)
LG	Parker Collins (6-3, 280, Sr.)
C	Tobias Edge-Campbell (6-2, 300, So.)
RG	Jamie Collmar (6-2, 295, Sr.)
RT	Colby Gossett (6-6, 315, Jr.)
TE	Barrett Burns (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR	Shaedon Meadors (6-2, 180, Jr.)
WR	Jaquil Capel (5-11, 190, Sr.)
WR	Jaylan Barbour (5-10, 180, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Nate Norwood (6-2, 240, Sr.)
NT	Tyson Fernandez (6-2, 320, Sr.)
DE	Caleb Fuller (6-0, 240, Jr.)
OLB	Kennan Gilchrist (6-2, 210, Sr.)
ILB	John Law (6-0, 230, Sr.)
ILB	Eric Boggs (6-3, 235, Jr.)
OLB	Devan Stringer (5-11, 200, Jr.)
CB	Latrell Gibbs (5-10, 170, Jr.)
CB	Tae Hayes (5-11, 175, So.)
S	A.J. Howard (5-11, 190, Jr.)
S	Alex Gray (6-3, 210, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Michael Rubino (6-3, 205, Fr.)
P	Bentlee Critcher (6-1, 190, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. Marcus Williams Jr., RB ★★★
2. Matthew McClurg, DE ★★★
3. K.J. Chamberlain, S ★★★

With an 11-2 record and second-place Sun Belt finish in 2015, the Mountaineers are making the FBS transition look easy and this class represents yet another solid building block. Four offensive linemen, two quarterbacks and three-star running back Marcus Williams Jr. (2,379 yards, 36 TDs in 2015) bode well for the future of what was the nation's No. 6 rushing offense in 2016.

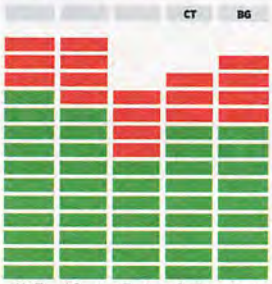
LAMB: RICHARD SHIRO / AP

GEORGIA SOUTHERN
EAGLES

RB Matt Breida

BREIDA: RAYMOND THOMPSON / AP

5-YEAR RECORD
46-18



WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Kevin Ellison (6-0, 195, Sr.)
RB	Matt Breida (5-11, 190, Sr.)
RB	L.A. Ramsby (5-11, 210, Jr.)
LT	Jeremiah Culbreth (6-4, 302, So.)
LG	Curtis Rainey (6-2, 297, So.)
C	Andy Kwon (6-2, 300, Sr.)
RG	Tommy Boynton (6-4, 300, Jr.)
RT	Max Magana (6-7, 290, Sr.)
TE	Isaiah Seise (6-2, 240, So.)
WR	Myles Campbell (5-6, 170, Jr.)
WR	BJ Johnson III (6-1, 212, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Bernard Dawson (6-2, 248, Sr.)
DT	Darrius Sapp (6-1, 330, Sr.)
NT	Jay Ellison (6-1, 310, Sr.)
DE	Jamal Johnson (6-2, 245, Sr.)
LB	Ironhead Gallon (5-10, 210, Sr.)
LB	Chris DeLaRosa (6-1, 230, Jr.)
LB	Ukeme Eligwe (6-2, 239, Jr.)
CB	Darius Jones Jr. (5-10, 180, Sr.)
CB	Christian Matthew (6-3, 175, Fr.)
S	Robert Brice II (5-11, 205, Jr.)
S	Vegas Harley (5-11, 185, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Younghoe Koo (5-10, 190, Sr.)
P	Matt Flynn (6-0, 200, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Darion Anderson,** WR ★★★
2. **Michael Jackson,** WR ★★★
3. **Drew Wilson,** OG ★★★

Georgia Southern took advantage of the talented Peach State as more than half of its top-ranked Sun Belt recruiting class came from within the borders. The in-state group is led by former Georgia Bulldogs commit and Semper Fidelis All-American Darion Anderson, a dynamic wideout, and one-time Syracuse cornerback commit Monquavion Brinson.

After going undefeated during 2014 conference play in Georgia Southern's first Sun Belt season and 9-4 with a GoDaddy Bowl berth last year, Willie Fritz–ex-head coach at FCS Sam Houston State–took another step up to Tulane.

The Eagles, a longtime FCS power before moving to the SBC, turn to Tyson Summers, who was defensive coordinator at Colorado State last year and UCF before that. The great news for Summers: Fritz left the pantry well-stocked at two critical positions in an offense that already is one of the nation's most prolific.

Georgia Southern has two solid senior quarterbacks back in 2015 with starter Kevin Ellison and Favian Upshaw, who combined for 1,295 rushing yards last season. That included 199 yards with four touchdowns by Upshaw in relief of the speedy Ellison en route to winning MVP honors during the Eagles' GoDaddy Bowl win over Bowling Green. They also return super running backs in Matt Breida (1,608 yards, 17 touchdowns), L.A. Ramsby (816, 13) and Wesley Fields (682, 7), which does wonders for the run-oriented, triple-option gun offense that makes Georgia Southern–the nation's leader in rushing yards the last two seasons and leader in rushing touchdowns last season with 55–a difficult prep. Breida, who missed spring ball following postseason surgery, is an All-Sun Belt running back.

Summers won't change much offensively but does want to pass more if opposing defenses allow. Having three starters on the offensive line back, including center Andy Kwon, should ease the transition.

Georgia Southern's defense usually holds up its end of the bargain, and 2016 should be no different as the Eagles return intact up front with two capable ends, seniors Bernard Dawson and Jamal Johnson, and some big-bodied tackles in 310-pound Jay Ellison and 330-pound Darrius Sapp.

Georgia Southern does lose 107-tackle linebacker Antwione Williams, but with Ironhead Gallon (81 tackles) taking a leadership role, Chris DeLaRosa back and highly regarded Florida State transfer Ukeme Eligwe built in Williams' mold, there might not be much drop-off.

The Eagles are a bit thin at cornerback with only Darius Jones Jr. playing there much last year, while ex-quarterback Vegas Harley moves to safety for his senior season.

On special teams, Younghoe Koo returns after handling field goals, PATs and kickoffs during the second half of last season.

With the offensive talent returning, Georgia Southern is loaded for a shot at another SBC title.

2

PREDICTED ORDER OF FINISH

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Savannah State	
S.10	@SOUTH ALABAMA	55-17
S.17	Louisiana-Monroe	51-31
S.24	@WEST. MICHIGAN	43-17
O.5	@ARKANSAS STATE	
O.15	@GEORGIA TECH	
O.22	@NEW MEXICO ST.	56-26
O.27	Appalachian State	13-31
N.5	@OLE MISS	
N.10	Louisiana	
N.19	@GEORGIA STATE	7-34
D.3	Troy	45-10

COACH

Tyson Summers
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Rance Gillespie (first year)
David Dean (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Lorenzo Costantini (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Beat Bowling Green in the GoDaddy Bowl, 58-27)
STADIUM: Allen E. Paulson Stadium (25,000)
TICKETS: 800-GSU-WINS
SITE: Statesboro, Ga.
WEBSITE: gseagles.com
TWITTER: @GSAthletics_FB

3 ARKANSAS STATE
RED WOLVES

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Toledo	7-37
S.10	@AUBURN	
S.17	@UTAH STATE	
S.24	Central Arkansas	
O.5	Georgia Southern	
O.15	South Alabama	49-31
O.29	Louisiana-Monroe	59-21
N.3	@GEORGIA STATE	48-34
N.12	New Mexico State	52-28
N.17	@TROY	
N.26	@LOUISIANA	37-27
D.3	@TEXAS STATE	55-17

COACH

Blake Anderson
Third year (16-10)
CAREER RECORD: 16-10

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Buster Faulkner (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Joe Cauthen (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Louisiana Tech in the New Orleans Bowl, 47-28)
STADIUM: Centennial Bank Stadium (30,382)
TICKETS: 870-680-8325
SITE: Jonesboro, Ark.
WEBSITE: astateredwolves.com
TWITTER: @RedWolvesFBall

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	James Tabary (6-2, 209, So.)
RB	Johnston White (5-11, 182, Jr.)
LT	Jemar Clark (6-6, 306, Sr.)
LG	Austin Moreton (6-1, 316, Sr.)
C	Devin Mondie (6-5, 304, Sr.)
RG	Colton Jackson (6-4, 281, Sr.)
RT	Joseph Bacchus (6-5, 275, Sr.)
TE	Warren Leapheart (6-5, 250, Sr.)
WR	Dijon Paschal (6-1, 211, Jr.)
WR	Chris Murray (5-9, 178, Jr.)
WR	Cameron Echols-Luper (6-0, 190, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ja'Von Rolland-Jones (6-2, 231, Jr.)
NG	Waylon Roberson (6-2, 338, Sr.)
DT	Dee Liner (6-3, 295, Jr.)
DE	Chase Robison (6-4, 234, Sr.)
LB	Khari Lain (5-10, 195, Jr.)
LB	Xavier Woodson-Luster (6-1, 209, Sr.)
DB	Justin Clifton (6-0, 207, So.)
CB	Blaise Taylor (5-9, 163, Jr.)
CB	Jamaris Hart (5-9, 165, Jr.)
S	Cody Brown (6-2, 204, Sr.)
S	Chris Humes (5-11, 204, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	J.D. Houston (5-11, 165, Sr.)
P	Damon Foncham (5-8, 190, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

Defending Sun Belt champion Arkansas State has a new quarterback and offensive coordinator, but after running through league play in 2015 undefeated, coach Blake Anderson's Red Wolves still have plenty going.

A-State's biggest 2016 win may be Anderson staying put as the program, 9-4 after a New Orleans Bowl loss to Louisiana Tech, pursues six straight bowl appearances.

From 2010-14, the Red Wolves had five head coaches, Anderson included. Newfound stability should help the transition away from two-year-starting QB Fredi Knighten and Walt Bell, now Maryland's offensive coordinator.

New offensive coordinator Buster Faulkner arrives from Middle Tennessee with a reputation for being more pass-oriented than A-State was while exploiting Knighten's run-geared skill set, which should serve whoever emerges from a battle among incumbent backup James Tabary, D.J. Pearson, Cameron Birse and ex-Oklahoma commit Justice Hansen.

It could be tough, though, topping a 2015 team that produced a Sun Belt-record 69 touchdowns and an SBC-record 520 points (defensive scoring included). The new QB loses 1,000-yard rusher Michael Gordon and receivers J.D. McKissic and Tres Houston, but keeps receiver Dijon Paschal and a strong line featuring Colton Jackson and Jemar Clark.

An Arkansas State defense that led the country last year in interceptions and defensive touchdowns returns end Ja'Von Rolland-Jones (league-high 9.0 sacks), linebackers Khari Lain and Xavier Woodson-Luster and safety Cody Brown. It could get even better with rush end Dee Liner, an Alabama transfer.

The Red Wolves also added speedy TCU transfer Cameron Echols-Luper, a wide receiver who could help the return game.

A-State should contend to win at least a share of the SBC title for the fifth time in six years.

4 TROY
TROJANS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Austin Peay	
S.10	@CLEMSON	
S.17	@SOUTHERN MISS	
S.24	New Mexico State	52-7
O.1	@IDAHO	16-19
O.15	Georgia State	21-31
O.20	@SOUTH ALABAMA	18-24
N.5	Massachusetts	
N.12	Appalachian State	41-44
N.17	Arkansas State	
N.26	@TEXAS STATE	
D.3	@GA. SOUTHERN	10-45

COACH

Neal Brown
Second year (4-8)
CAREER RECORD: 4-8

OFFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Kenny Edenfield (seventh year)
Matt Moore (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Vic Koenning (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Veterans Memorial Stadium (30,000)
TICKETS: 877-878-WINS
SITE: Troy, Ala.
WEBSITE: troytrojans.com
TWITTER: @TroyTrojansFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Brandon Silvers (6-3, 214, Jr.)
RB	Jordan Chunn (6-1, 227, Jr.)
LT	Antonio Garcia (6-7, 302, Sr.)
LG	Johnathan Boring (6-5, 306, Sr.)
C	Brandon Niccum (6-4, 295, Jr.)
RG	Xavier Fields (6-5, 329, Sr.)
RT	Tyler Lassiter (6-6, 302, Sr.)
TE	Gabe Hill (6-2, 232, So.)
WR	Clark Quisenberry (6-3, 220, Sr.)
WR	Deondre Douglas (6-1, 200, So.)
WR	Emanuel Thompson (6-1, 193, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Rashad Dillard (6-1, 261, Sr.)
NG	Trevon Sanders (6-0, 319, So.)
DT	Seth Calloway (6-3, 267, Jr.)
DE	Terris Lewis (6-2, 229, Sr.)
LB	William Lloyd (6-0, 214, Sr.)
LB	Justin Lucas (5-10, 227, Sr.)
DB	A.J. Smiley (6-3, 203, So.)
CB	Kamryn Melton (5-10, 185, Jr.)
CB	Jalen Harris (6-0, 182, Jr.)
S	Cedarius Rookard (6-1, 206, So.)
S	Kris Weatherspoon (6-2, 195, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ryan Kay (6-2, 207, Sr.)
P	Ryan Kay (6-2, 207, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

Troy coach **Neal Brown**

Troy went 4-8 in coach Neal Brown's first year with the Trojans but is still riding high from a 41-17 season-ending win at Louisiana.

And there is one highly encouraging sign for the Trojans heading into their second season in two-plus decades without Larry Blakeney running things: Four of their five 2015 Sun Belt losses were by a combined 22 points. That stat suggests they are close to turning the corner after five non-winning seasons since going 8-5 and capturing the 2010 New Orleans Bowl.

Also in the plus column is quarterback Brandon Silvers' return after a sophomore season in which he went 202-of-330 for 2,378 yards and 20 touchdowns in 11 games. It doesn't hurt being protected by NFL prospect Antonio Garcia at tackle.

The downside is Troy will be without two top weapons from last season, as neither 1,000-yard rusher Brandon Burks nor receiver Teddy Ruben (63 catches, 879 yards) remain. It will help, though, if running back Jordan Chunn returns to form from 2013 (14 touchdowns as a freshman) and 2014 (505 rushing yards) after missing most of 2015 with a broken collarbone.

Defensive end Rashad Dillard (7.0 sacks) and others must step up with Tyler Roberts (17.0 tackles for loss) gone. Terris Lewis moves from linebacker to defensive end, and linebacker William Lloyd (9.0 tackles for loss last year) should help too. Cornerback Kamryn Melton, who redshirted at Auburn in 2014 and sat out last season after transferring, could provide a boost in the secondary.

Silvers can't do it alone, so the support he gets could be the difference-maker.

BROWN: ANDRES LEIGHTON / AP

5 LOUISIANA
RAGIN' CAJUNS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Boise State	
S.10	McNeese State	
S.17	South Alabama	25-32
S.24	@TULANE	
O.1	@NEW MEX. STATE	34-37
O.12	Appalachian State	7-28
O.22	@TEXAS STATE	49-27
N.5	Idaho	
N.10	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	
N.19	@GEORGIA	
N.26	Arkansas State	27-37
D.3	@LA.-MONROE	30-24

COACH

Mark Hudspeth
Sixth year (40-24)
CAREER RECORD: 106-45

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jorge Munoz (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATORS:
Melvin Smith (second year)
Charlie Harbison (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Cajun Field (36,900)
TICKETS: 337-265-2104
SITE: Lafayette, La.
WEBSITE: ragincajuns.com
TWITTER: @RaginCajunsFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Jordan Davis** (6-3, 205, So.)
RB	**Elijah McGuire** (5-11, 208, Sr.)
LT	**D'Aquin Withrow** (6-6, 304, Jr.)
LG	**Robert Hunt** (6-5, 315, Fr.)
C	**Eddie Gordon** (6-1, 320, Sr.)
RG	**Adrian Goodacre** (6-4, 305, So.)
RT	**Grant Horst** (6-5, 281, Jr.)
TE	**Nick Byrne** (6-3, 228, Sr.)
WR	**Gabe Fuselier** (5-11, 195, Jr.)
WR	**Devin Scott** (5-11, 182, Sr.)
WR	**Al Riles** (5-10, 215, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Mario Osborne** (6-4, 250, So.)
NG	**Karmichael Dunbar** (6-2, 317, Sr.)
DT	**Taboris Lee** (6-2, 284, Jr.)
LB	**Otha Peters** (6-2, 228, Sr.)
LB	**Tre'maine Lightfoot** (6-0, 230, Sr.)
LB	**Tracy Walker** (6-2, 198, Jr.)
CB	**Troy McCollum** (6-0, 177, Jr.)
CB	**Simeon Thomas** (6-3, 197, Jr.)
S	**Dominick Jones** (5-11, 189, Sr.)
S	**Savion Brown** (6-2, 218, Sr.)
S	**Travis Crawford** (5-11, 193, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Stevie Artigue** (5-10, 175, So.)
P	**Steven Coutts** (6-4, 200, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Louisiana's 2016 fate hinges largely on running back Elijah McGuire, the Sun Belt's 2014 Player of the Year.

McGuire had 1,264 rushing and 468 receiving yards two years ago, when for a fourth straight season Mark Hudspeth's Ragin' Cajuns finished 9-4 and won the New Orleans Bowl. But with no power back helping in 2015—Alonzo Harris did previously, but played in the NFL last season—McGuire was limited to 1,058 yards rushing and 293 receiving and UL went 4-8.

There were other contributing factors, including the early-season injury loss of NFL-hopeful offensive lineman Mykhael Quave. Still, UL has made major changes with a more McGuire-friendly offense in mind.

Quarterback Brooks Haack, out of a starting job, left for FCS Northwestern State, and the plan was to move part-time 2015 starter Jalen Nixon to running back, so third-year sophomore Jordan Davis was fending off redshirt freshman Chris Weaver for the starting job at press time.

Jorge Munoz, promoted from receivers coach after Jay Johnson left for Minnesota, takes over as coordinator of an offense that loses NFL prospect Jamal Robinson at wide receiver but returns starting center Eddie Gordon.

The Cajun defense, impacted by All-SBC linebacker Dominique Tovell's exit but returning hard-hitting inside linebacker Otha Peters, worked in the spring with standout cornerback Savion Brown playing safety and safety Tracy Walker moving down to a hybrid linebacker/safety spot.

Louisiana also signed four junior-college defensive linemen to address a weak spot, while also landing heralded Mississippi juco defensive backs Denarius Howard and Artez Williams.

With an NFL future as his carrot, McGuire is key to the Cajuns returning to their winning ways.

6 GEORGIA STATE
PANTHERS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	Ball State	31-19
S.10	@AIR FORCE	
S.17	@WISCONSIN	
O.1	@APP. STATE	3-37
O.8	Texas State	41-19
O.15	@TROY	31-21
O.22	Tennessee-Martin	
O.29	@SOUTH ALABAMA	24-10
N.3	Arkansas State	34-48
N.12	Louisiana-Monroe	
N.19	Georgia Southern	34-7
D.3	@IDAHO	

COACH

Trent Miles
Fourth year (7-30)
CAREER RECORD: 27-66

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Luke Huard (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Jesse Minter (fourth year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 6-7
(Lost to San Jose State in the Cure Bowl, 27-16)
STADIUM: Georgia Dome (28,155)
TICKETS: 404-413-4020
SITE: Atlanta
WEBSITE: georgiastatesports.com
TWITTER: @GeorgiaStateFB

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Emiere Scaife** (6-2, 218, So.)
RB	**Glenn Smith** (6-1, 185, Jr.)
LT	**Michael Ivory** (6-5, 340, Sr.)
LG	**Davis Moore** (6-4, 300, Jr.)
C	**Gabe Mobley** (6-2, 275, So.)
RG	**Alex Stoehr** (6-2, 300, Jr.)
RT	**Sebastian Willer** (6-5, 279, Jr.)
TE	**Keith Rucker** (6-3, 235, Sr.)
WR	**Robert Davis** (6-3, 198, Sr.)
WR	**Penny Hart** (5-8, 170, So.)
WR	**Todd Boyd** (5-11, 180, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Shawanye Lawrence** (6-4, 270, Sr.)
NG	**Jalen Lawrence** (6-1, 285, Sr.)
DE	**Mackendy Cheridor** (6-5, 250, Jr.)
OLB	**Michael Shaw** (6-4, 222, So.)
ILB	**Trey Payne** (6-0, 230, Jr.)
ILB	**Alonzo McGee** (6-1, 220, Sr.)
OLB	**Andrew Everett** (6-5, 240, Sr.)
CB	**Chandon Sullivan** (5-11, 185, Jr.)
CB	**Jerome Smith** (5-10, 165, So.)
S	**Bobby Baker** (6-2, 200, Sr.)
S	**Bryan Williams** (6-3, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Brandon Wright** (5-10, 160, Fr.)
P	**Brandon Wright** (5-10, 160, Fr.)

Sporting News All-American

Last season's Sun Belt Player of the Year, Nick Arbuckle, set a single-season conference record with 4,368 passing yards, but did it as a senior, so SBC defenses need not worry about that.

But after Georgia State finished 2015 with four straight regular-season victories to secure its first bowl bid, a Cure Bowl berth, SBC Coach of the Year Trent Miles' concern after going 6-7 is identifying his next quarterback. The leading candidates are third-year sophomore southpaw Emiere Scaife, Utah transfer Conner Manning and redshirt-freshman scrambler Aaron Winchester.

Trent Miles

Terrific hands await the winner. Sun Belt Freshman of the Year Penny Hart had 71 catches for 1,099 yards and eight touchdowns, and Robert Davis (61, 980) begins his senior season as the league's top active career receiver while tight end Keith Rucker added 39 catches last year.

Georgia State's stable of running backs has redshirted Kendrick Dorn (knee injury) joining Glenn Smith, Kyler Neal, Demarcus Kirk and shifty Taz Bateman, who missed six games with an arm injury last year.

Nine defensive starters return, including inside linebacker Alonzo McGee, end Shawanye Lawrence, cornerback Chandon Sullivan and safety Bobby Baker. The losses, though, are huge, as all-time-leading tackler Joseph Peterson and career-interceptions leader Tarris Batiste helped the Panthers become the most improved FBS defense in 2015 by permitting 15 fewer points per game.

Another notable loss: kicker/punter Wil Lutz.

A new quarterback could challenge Georgia State's bid to prove 2015 was no fluke.

MILES: ANDRES LEIGHTON / AP

7 IDAHO VANDALS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Montana State	
S.10	@WASHINGTON	
S.17	@WASHINGTON STATE	
S.24	@UNLV	
O.1	Troy	19-16
O.8	@LA-MONROE	27-13
O.15	New Mexico State	48-55
O.22	@APP. STATE	20-47
N.5	@LOUISIANA	
N.12	@TEXAS STATE	38-31
N.26	South Alabama	45-52
D.3	Georgia State	

COACH

Paul Petrino
Fourth year (6-29)
CAREER RECORD: 6-29

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kris Cinkovich (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Mike Breske (second year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 4-8
STADIUM: Kibbie Dome (16,000)
TICKETS: 208-885-6466
SITE: Moscow, Idaho
WEBSITE: govandals.com
TWITTER: @VandalFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Matt Linehan (6-3, 214, Jr.)
RB	Aaron Duckworth (5-8, 201, Jr.)
LT	Jordan Rose (6-6, 322, Jr.)
LG	Calvin White (6-5, 298, Sr.)
C	Steven Matlock (6-2, 270, Sr.)
RG	Mason Woods (6-9, 336, Sr.)
RT	Darius Peterson (6-6, 302, Sr.)
TE	Trent Cowan (6-3, 224, Sr.)
WR	Callen Hightower (5-10, 177, Sr.)
WR	Jacob Sannon (5-11, 191, Jr.)
WR	David Ungerer (5-8, 171, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	Tueni Lupeamanu (6-1, 305, Sr.)
DT	Glen Antoine (6-4, 325, Sr.)
DE	Kevin Shelton (6-3, 265, Jr.)
LB	Khalin Smith (6-5, 245, Sr.)
LB	Kaden Elliss (6-3, 216, So.)
LB	Ed Hall (6-0, 209, So.)
LB	Tony Lashley (6-1, 236, So.)
CB	Jayshawn Jordan (5-9, 185, Sr.)
CB	Dorian Clark (6-0, 182, Jr.)
S	Russell Siavii (6-2, 208, Sr.)
S	Jordan Grabski (6-0, 189, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Austin Rehkow (6-3, 208, Sr.)
P	Austin Rehkow (6-3, 208, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

QB Matt Linehan

Idaho quarterback Matt Linehan missed spring drills to repair a foot injury he played through in 2015, allowing backup Jake Luton lots of reps.

But if coach Paul Petrino's Vandals–blessed with a superb punter/kicker in senior Austin Rehkow–are to play in the postseason for the first time since winning the 2009 Humanitarian Bowl, it could be because Linehan takes another big step forward.

He's already the leader in passing yards per game (270.2), total passing yards (2,972), total offense (3,206 yards) and both completions and completion percentage (246-for-390; 63.1 percent) among Sun Belt returnees, and much of what Idaho does hinges on the arm of the son of Dallas Cowboys offensive coordinator Scott Linehan.

With five 300-plus-yard passing games during a 4-8 season, Linehan relies heavily on tight end Trent Cowan, who had 48 grabs for 624 yards in 2015, and athletic Callen Hightower (57, 749), who assumed the lead receiver role after Dezmon Epps' dismissal last October. But Idaho also must replace 1,159-yard rusher Elijhaa Penny, so last year's backup, Aaron Duckworth, must put his best foot forward behind a Jordan Rose-led line.

Defensively, Idaho loses top tackler Broc Westlake and No. 3 Marc Millan. But fellow linebacker Kaden Elliss returns with a team-high 66 solo stops, while linebacker Tony Lashley and Jayshawn Jordan, a cornerback/return man who got a spring look at safety, are back after being slowed by 2015 injuries.

The Vandals' FBS future is uncertain after getting booted from the SBC starting in 2018, but if Linehan performs they could go bowling before possibly returning to FCS play.

8 SOUTH ALABAMA JAGUARS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
S.10	Georgia Southern	17-55
S.17	@LOUISIANA	32-25
S.24	Nicholls State	
O.1	San Diego State	34-27
O.15	@ARKANSAS STATE	31-49
O.20	Troy	24-18
O.29	Georgia State	10-24
N.5	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	
N.19	@LSU	
N.26	@IDAHO	52-45
D.3	New Mexico State	

COACH

Joey Jones
Eighth year (42-35)
CAREER RECORD: 42-35

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Bryant Vincent (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Kane Wommack (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 5-7
STADIUM: Ladd-Peebles Stadium (33,471)
TICKETS: 251-461-1USA
SITE: Mobile, Ala.
WEBSITE: usajaguars.com
TWITTER: @JagsFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Dallas Davis (6-2, 210, So.)
RB	Xavier Johnson (5-11, 180, Jr.)
LT	Curtis Williams (6-5, 290, Jr.)
LG	Steven Foster (6-4, 305, Sr.)
C	Nelson Santiago (6-3, 270, Fr.)
RG	De'Arius Young (6-7, 325, Sr.)
RT	Noah Fisher (6-4, 290, So.)
TE	Gerald Everett (6-4, 225, Sr.)
WR	Tyrone Williams (6-2, 190, Sr.)
WR	Josh Magee (5-11, 170, Sr.)
WR	Cameron Broadnax (6-2, 200, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Sean Grayer (6-2, 245, So.)
DT	Tre Alford (5-10, 280, Jr.)
DT	Tyree Turner (6-1, 285, So.)
DE	Randy Allen (6-2, 235, Jr.)
LB	Bull Barge (5-10, 225, So.)
LB	Roman Buchanan (6-2, 215, Sr.)
CB	Jalen Thompson (6-0, 165, So.)
CB	Jeremy Reaves (5-11, 185, Jr.)
S	Kalen Jackson (6-1, 200, Sr.)
S	Devon Earl (5-10, 180, Sr.)
S	Nigel Lawrence (5-11, 180, So.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Aleem Sunanon (5-7, 170, Sr.)
P	Corliss Waitman (6-2, 185, So.)

Sporting News All-American

With 2,272-yard passer Cody Clements' college career done, South Alabama–5-7 ending with three straight losses last season–went into spring drills needing a starting quarterback.

All three contenders are third-year sophomores: Dallas Davis, last year's sparingly used backup; Evan Orth, a 2014 UAB redshirt; and Cole Garvin, who redshirted at Marshall in 2014.

The winner will rely heavily on NFL prospect Gerald Everett (team-high 41 catches, team-leading 575 yards and eight touchdowns in 2015) at tight end and wideout Josh Magee, both former UAB players.

What coach Joey Jones wants most offensively, though, is improvement, especially in the red zone, from a ground game that averaged 160.7 yards per game last season–seventh in the Sun Belt. Translation: increased production from backs Xavier Johnson (145 carries, 956 yards) and Tyreis Thomas behind a line led by left tackle Curtis Williams.

Senior kicker Aleem Sunanon lends special-teams stability. But there is change galore for a defense now led by ex-Eastern Illinois defensive coordinator Kane Wommack.

The Jaguars added former Oregon State linebacker Darrell Songy, who went into the spring behind Bull Barge at the Mike position, while standout defensive back Roman Buchanan transitions to linebacker and Kalen Jackson, another UAB transfer, heads to safety after being in on 72 tackles at linebacker last year. Jackson joins a secondary featuring Jeremy Reaves (a nickel back last season) and Jalen Thompson, both now cornerbacks and deemed by Jones as good as it gets when it comes to Sun Belt corners.

An early game at Mississippi State and a late one at LSU won't make things easier for a team facing six 2015 bowl participants.

LINEHAN: ANDRES LEIGHTON / AP

9 NEW MEXICO STATE AGGIES

In a league loaded with legit rushers, New Mexico State has one of the best despite finishing 3-9 last season.

Third-team AP All-American Larry Rose III is the reigning Sun Belt Offensive Player of the Year after rushing 239 times for a league-high 1,647 yards as a sophomore, capping back-to-back 1,000-yard seasons. Rose also led the SBC in all-purpose yards (1,934) and had 30 receptions last year, which should make life easier for NMSU quarterbacks.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	@UTEP
S.10	New Mexico
S.17	@KENTUCKY
S.24	@TROY
O.1	Louisiana
O.15	@IDAHO
O.22	Georgia Southern
O.29	@TEXAS A&M
N.12	@ARK. STATE
N.19	Texas State
N.26	Appalachian State
D.3	@SOUTH ALABAMA

But Tyler Rogers had season-ending surgery to repair a broken thumb and was replaced by then-sophomore Andrew Allen, who left the team this spring, leaving Rogers to face competition from Tyler Matthews if the graduate transfer arrives as expected from Southern Miss. Receiver Tyrian Taylor (team-high 691 receiving yards) returns, but Teldrick Morgan (team-high 44 catches in nine games) also left in the spring.

Doug Martin

Offense, though, isn't the biggest issue. Defense is.

So Aggies coach Doug Martin, a former Boston College offensive coordinator, hired his old boss, ex-BC head coach Frank Spaziani, as NMSU's fourth defensive coordinator in four seasons. Spaziani's task: fix a unit that permitted 45.0 points per game last year, third worst nationally. His job started with standout lineman Stody Bradley missing spring practice with a shoulder injury that dates to 2015.

Curing an ill defense is paramount if NMSU is to win more than three games for just the second time in nine years.

QUICK HITS 2015 RECORD: 3-9

COACH: Doug Martin (fourth year, 7-29)
CAREER RECORD: 36-82
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Doug Martin (fourth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Frank Spaziani (first year)
STADIUM: Aggie Memorial Stadium (30,343)
TICKETS: 575-646-1420
SITE: Las Cruces, N.M.
WEBSITE: nmstatesports.com
TWITTER: @NMStateFOOTBALL

10 TEXAS STATE BOBCATS

Dennis Franchione retired five seasons into his second Texas State stint and Everett Withers takes over a team that was 7-5 in 2014 but 3-9 in 2015.

The Bobcats will look different under longtime FBS defensive assistant and coordinator Withers, who left the head-coaching position at FCS James Madison to take over in San Marcos.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	@OHIO
S.17	@ARKANSAS
S.24	Houston
O.1	Incarnate Word
O.8	@GEORGIA STATE
O.15	@LA.-MONROE
O.22	Louisiana
N.5	@APP. STATE
N.12	Idaho
N.19	@NEW MEX. STATE
N.26	Troy
D.3	Arkansas State

New offensive coordinator Brett Elliott followed Withers from JMU and will make the Bobcats, who lose 915-yard rusher Robert Lowe, more uptempo. He wants a quarterback who'll throw and run from the spread, and while Tyler Jones (2,517 passing yards last year) somewhat fits the bill, he's guaranteed nothing.

The two-year starter ranks second behind Idaho's Matt Linehan among returning Sun Belt total-offense leaders at 256.4 yards per game (including 209.8 passing) and had 583 rushing yards with 10 touchdowns.

Texas State has issues along the offensive line, with standout tackle Ryan Melton back and guard Felix Romero (knee) returning after missing the spring but pro prospect Adrian Bellard is gone, and four would-be returnees exiting, including promising youngster Kian Schoenborn and Will Trevillion's sudden death in January.

Defensive coordinator Randall McCray, who arrives from FCS Gardner-Webb, is changing the base scheme from 4-2-5 to 3-4, so a unit that yielded 521.8 yards per game and intercepted just three passes last year is more multiple. The Bobcats lose an NFL prospect in cornerback David Mims II, but safety Damani Alexcee (team-high 79 tackles) returns, as does Dallas McClarty, a two-year starter on the defensive line.

It's as if Withers starts from scratch.

QUICK HITS 2015 RECORD: 3-9

COACH: Everett Withers (first year)
CAREER RECORD: 25-13
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brett Elliott (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Randall McCray (first year)
STADIUM: Bobcat Stadium (30,000)
TICKETS: 512-245-2272
SITE: San Marcos, Texas
WEBSITE: txstatebobcats.com
TWITTER: @TXSTATEFOOTBALL

11 LOUISIANA-MONROE WARHAWKS

Todd Berry is out and Matt Viator in at Louisiana-Monroe, which requires major reconstruction after going 2-11 in 2015.

Berry was ousted three seasons after an Independence Bowl appearance, and Viator—three-time Southland Conference Coach of the Year during 10 years at McNeese State—must turn around a team that at least has some experienced youngsters.

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT
S.3	Southern
S.10	@OKLAHOMA
S.17	@GA. SOUTHERN
O.1	@AUBURN
O.8	Idaho
O.15	Texas State
O.22	@NEW MEXICO
O.29	@ARKANSAS STATE
N.5	South Alabama
N.12	@GEORGIA STATE
N.19	@APP. STATE
D.3	Louisiana

Before a shoulder injury, Garrett Smith threw for 2,033 yards and 17 touchdowns in 10 games. Marcus Green had a team-high 63 receptions for 698 yards. And running back Ben Luckett showed strong late, including an 18-carry, 149-yard game against Arkansas State. All three played as redshirt freshmen, as did kicker Craig Ford.

Returning receiver Ajalen Holley had another 60 grabs in a pass-heavy 2015 scheme. But Viator rode a run-strong offense to a 10-0 regular season at McNeese State, and new offensive coordinator Matt Kubik passed more at Stephen F. Austin, so it will be interesting to see how balanced ULM's offense becomes.

Berry's 3-3-5 defense is also out at a program that loses 100-tackle linebackers Hunter Kissinger and Michael Johnson, plus defensive-line forces Gerrand Johnson and Ben Banogu (transferred to TCU).

Coordinator Mike Collins arrives from FCS power Sam Houston State to run a 4-2-5 for the Warhawks, who'll play ex-starting free safety Justin Backus—reinstated by Viator after Berry dismissed him—at hybrid safety/outside linebacker.

Viator has a project on his hands.

QUICK HITS 2015 RECORD: 2-11

COACH: Matt Viator (first year)
CAREER RECORD: 78-33
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Matt Kubik (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Collins (first year)
STADIUM: Malone Stadium (30,427)
TICKETS: 318-342-3ULM
SITE: Monroe, La.
WEBSITE: ulmwarhawks.com
TWITTER: @ULM_FB

MARTIN: ANDRES LEIGHTON / AP

NOTRE DAME
FIGHTING IRISH

10
Sporting News
2016 NATIONAL RANK

QB DeShone Kizer

BOWL PROJECTION: TaxSlayer Bowl

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.4	@TEXAS	38-3
S.10	Nevada	
S.17	Michigan State	
S.24	Duke	
O.1	Syracuse*	
O.8	@N.C. STATE	
O.15	Stanford	36-38
O.29	Miami (Fla.)	
N.5	Navy**	41-24
N.12	Army***	
N.19	Virginia Tech	
N.26	@USC	41-31

*At East Rutherford, NJ
**At Jacksonville, FL
***At San Antonio, TX

Brian Kelly

COACH

Brian Kelly
Seventh year (55-23)
CAREER RECORD: 226-80-2

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mike Sanford (second year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brian VanGorder (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 10-3
(Lost to Ohio State in the Fiesta Bowl, 44-28)
STADIUM: Notre Dame Stadium (80,795)
TICKETS: 574-631-7356
SITE: South Bend, Ind.
WEBSITE: und.com
TWITTER: @NDFootball

Will it be the voice of a senior, the body of work, or superior talent that carries the most weight for this Notre Dame football team?

That's the dilemma facing Fighting Irish football coach Brian Kelly in the pivotal quarterback competition that will serve as the cornerstone of the 2016 season.

Senior Malik Zaire won an adversarial battle with Everett Golson last spring, but was sidelined after the second game with a broken ankle.

Junior DeShone Kizer took over, leading the Irish to a 10-3 season that ended with a loss to Ohio State in the Fiesta Bowl.

The wild card in the situation may be sophomore Brandon Wimbush, who could offer the best combination of physical tools.

Once Notre Dame settles on a quarterback, several other position battles likely will have been worked out.

And there are plenty of concerns to be settled. The Irish, with 10 returning starters, will be among the least experienced teams in the country this season.

But that doesn't mean the cupboard is bare. Like at running back. C.J. Prosise left for the NFL, but Tarean Folston (who missed most of last year with a knee injury) and Josh Adams make it a position of strength.

When a team loses big-time playmakers like Will Fuller and Chris Brown, there would likely be a drop-off at receiver. Plug in Equanimeous St. Brown, Torii Hunter Jr. (son of the former Major League Baseball All-Star), Corey Holmes, C.J. Sanders and Corey Robinson and the transition might not be so painful.

Durham Smythe, who was hurt most of last season, is back to offer experience at tight end. Add in dynamic sophomore Alize Jones, and it makes for more targets for whoever is throwing the passes.

Notre Dame's offensive line guru, assistant coach Harry Hiestand, knew he was going to lose left tackle Ronnie Stanley and center Nick Martin to graduation. He got blindsided, however, when right guard Steve Elmer left a year on the table to accept a job offer in Washington, D.C.

Mike McGlinchey, last year's right tackle, will move to the left side and assume a leadership role. Quenton Nelson will likely be the starter again at left guard. Sam Mustipher and Tristen Hoge are expected to

DIFFERENCE-MAKER

QB DeShone Kizer

Notre Dame will have plenty of fresh faces in South Bend for 2016 following one of the most prolific offenses of the Brian Kelly Era. One familiar face will be returning quarterback DeShone Kizer, who took more than 700 snaps last season despite not taking over as the starter until the third game. Kizer rushed for 520 yards and 10 touchdowns along with putting up 2,884 yards and 21 touchdowns through the air. The 6-5, 230-pound junior from Toledo, Ohio, was also efficient, completing 63 percent of 335 passes and throwing just 10 picks. Kizer had all of his talents on display in a 24-20 win at Temple last October, completing 23 of 36 passes for 299 yards and rushing 17 times for 143 yards and two touchdowns.

KIZER: RICHARD SHIRO / AP; KELLY: MICHAEL CONROY / AP

have a spirited battle to be the center. The loser of that competition may slide over to right guard to battle Colin McGovern and Trevor Ruhland for playing time. Alex Bars, Hunter Bivin and 6-5, 310-pound true freshman Tommy Kraemer will compete at right tackle.

Defensively, standout players like Sheldon Day (line), Romeo Okwara (end), Jaylon Smith (linebacker) and KeiVarae Russell (cornerback) are gone. A unit that had its share of struggles last year under coordinator Brian VanGorder will try to find new stars.

First order of business: Find a pass rush. Twenty-five sacks in 13 games, last year's total, aren't good enough. There will be a push up front from Jarron Jones, who missed most of 2015 with a knee injury, Jerry Tillery and Daniel Cage, but the big plays have to come from the end. Andrew Trumbetti, Isaac Rochell and true freshman Daelin Hayes are the projected impact players there.

Joe Schmidt, the brains of the operation last year, and Smith have left some gaping holes at linebacker. James Onwualu is back at strongside linebacker. Nyles Morgan, pressed into extensive duty two years ago when Schmidt was hurt late in the season, is established in the middle. Te'von Coney, who had a shoulder injury in the Fiesta Bowl when he filled in after Smith's knee injury, will compete with Josh Barajas for the weakside role.

Drue Tranquill, who blew out his ACL last season landing a jump in a celebration, is back at strong safety. Max Redfield, who had disciplinary problems last year and was sent home prior to Notre Dame's Fiesta Bowl game, is back in good graces with Kelly and is expected to start at free safety.

Shaun Crawford missed all of last season after a knee injury suffered in fall camp. He could be one of the big surprises in the secondary, battling the projected starters at cornerback, Devin Butler and Cole Luke, for playing time and will at least see regular time at nickel back.

Kicker Justin Yoon was impressive as a freshman, handling some pressure-packed situations well. Likewise, in his first year as the Irish punter, Tyler Newsome made a significant impact as a reliable weapon.

Along with being a key receiver, Sanders is a big-time threat as a punt and kick returner.

–Al Lesar

RECRUITING REPORT 247SPORTS

The Irish signed the nation's No. 15 recruiting class while addressing their biggest need by landing their top targets in the secondary. Safeties Devin Studstill and Jalen Elliott along with cornerbacks Troy Pride and Donte Vaughn highlight the group, and Studstill and Elliott could be counted on to play right away. The Irish bring in three blue-chippers on the offensive line, led by class jewel Tommy Kraemer, and California receiver Javon McKinley was the top target at his position. Of the 23 signees, 10 rank four stars or better per the 247Sports Composite rating. The other need, pass rushers, are highlighted in this class by the younger brother of Notre Dame graduate Romeo Okwara in four-star prospect Julian Okwara.

TOP SIGNEES

247 STAR RATING

1 **Tommy Kraemer,** OT ★★★★
2 **Liam Eichenberg,** OT ★★★★
3 **Javon McKinley,** WR ★★★★

RETURNING STAT LEADERS

PASSING

DeShone Kizer

GP	Effic.	Cmp-Att-Int	Pct.	Yds.	TD	Avg/G
13	150.0	211-335-10	63.0	2884	21	221.8

RUSHING	GP	Att.	Net	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Josh Adams	13	117	835	7.1	6	64.2

RECEIVING	GP	No.	Yds.	Avg.	TD	Avg/G
Torii Hunter Jr.	13	28	363	13.0	2	27.9

TACKLES	GP	Solo	Assist	Total
Max Redfield	11	39	25	64

SACKS	GP	No.	Yards
James Onwualu	11	3.0	18

INTERCEPTIONS	No.	Yards	Avg.	TD
Cole Luke	2	-3	-1.5	0

TEAM TRADITION

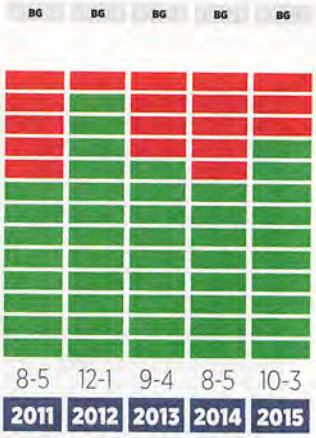
In 1964, a mural known as "The Word of Life" was installed on the Hesburgh Library facing Notre Dame Stadium. It's commonly referred to as "Touchdown Jesus." That 1964 season, the first under coach Ara Parseghian, resulted in a national championship and a Heisman Trophy for quarterback John Huarte. The image, which shows Jesus with raised arms, came to be known as Touchdown Jesus and can be seen from the stadium on game days.

2015 TEAM STATS

STATISTIC	ND	OPP
SCORING	445	313
Points Per Game	34.2	24.1
FIRST DOWNS	292	242
Rushing	129	109
Passing	143	108
Penalty	20	25
RUSHING YARDAGE	2699	2283
Yards gained rushing	3038	2617
Yards lost rushing	339	334
Rushing Attempts	479	496
Average Per Rush	5.6	4.6
Average Per Game	207.6	175.6
TDs Rushing	29	21
PASSING YARDAGE	3364	2562
Comp-Att-Int	241-385-10	207-374-9
Average Per Pass	8.7	6.9
Average Per Catch	14.0	12.4
Average Per Game	258.8	197.1
TDs Passing	25	18
TOTAL OFFENSE	6063	4845
Total Plays	864	870
Average Per Play	7.0	5.6
Average Per Game	466.4	372.7
KICK RETURNS: #-YDS	38-825	58-1283
PUNT RETURNS: #-YDS	27-215	22-194
INT RETURNS: #-YDS	9-65	10-38
KICK RETURN AVG.	21.7	22.1
PUNT RETURN AVG.	8.0	8.8
INT RETURN AVG.	7.2	3.8
FUMBLES-LOST	21-10	16-5
PENALTIES-YARDS	67-586	67-647
Average Per Game	45.1	49.8
PUNTS-YARDS	57-2527	73-3059
Average Per Punt	44.3	41.9
Net punt average	38.1	38.1
TIME OF POSS./GAME	29:39	30:21
3RD-DOWN CONV.	68/160	66/188
3rd-Down Pct.	42%	35%
4TH-DOWN CONV.	5/8	14/22
4th-Down Pct.	62%	64%
SACKS BY-YARDS	25-172	26-159
MISC. YARDS	0	0
TDS SCORED	58	40
FG-ATTEMPTS	15-17	12-20
ATTENDANCE	484770	329719
Games/Avg Per Game	6/80795	5/65944
Neutral Site Games		2/54904

SCORE BY QTRS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	OT	Total
NOTRE DAME	123	105	97	120	0	445
Opponent	71	91	58	93	0	313

5-YEAR RECORD 47-18



WIN LOSS

CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

2016 DEPTH CHART

OFFENSE

QB	**DeShone Kizer** (6-5, 230, Jr.)
	Malik Zaire (6-0, 225, Sr.)
RB	**Tarean Folston** (5-10, 214, Sr.)
	Josh Adams (6-2, 219, So.)
LT	**Mike McGlinchey** (6-8, 310, Sr.)
	Hunter Bivin (6-6, 308, Sr.)
LG	**Quenton Nelson** (6-5, 325, Jr.)
	Jimmy Byrne (6-4, 300, Jr.)
C	**Sam Mustipher** (6-3, 305, Jr.)
	Tristen Hoge (6-5, 300, So.)
RG	**Colin McGovern** (6-5, 315, Sr.)
	Trevor Ruhland (6-4, 300, So.)
RT	**Alex Bars** (6-6, 320, Jr.)
	Tommy Kraemer (6-5, 310, Fr.)
TE	**Durham Smythe** (6-5, 245, Sr.)
	Alize Jones (6-5, 240, So.)
WR	**Equanimeous St. Brown** (6-4, 205, So.)
	Corey Holmes (6-1, 190, Jr.)
WR	**Torii Hunter Jr.** (6-0, 195, Sr.)
	C.J. Sanders (5-8, 185, So.)
WR	**Corey Robinson** (6-5, 215, Sr.)
	Miles Boykin (6-4, 225, So.)

DEFENSE

DE	**Andrew Trumbetti** (6-4, 260, Jr.)
	Daelin Hayes (6-4, 257, Fr.)
DT	**Jerry Tillery** (6-7, 310, So.)
	Jonathan Bonner (6-3, 286, Jr.)
NG	**Jarron Jones** (6-6, 315, Sr.)
	Daniel Cage (6-1, 315, Jr.)
DE	**Isaac Rochell** (6-4, 290, Sr.)
	Jay Hayes (6-3, 285, Jr.)
SLB	**James Onwualu** (6-1, 232, Sr.)
	Asmar Bilal (6-2, 230, So.)
MLB	**Nyles Morgan** (6-1, 245, Jr.)
	Greer Martini (6-3, 245, Jr.)
WLB	**Te'von Coney** (6-1, 235, So.)
	Josh Barajas (6-2, 240, So.)
CB	**Devin Butler** (6-1, 200, Sr.)
	Nick Watkins (6-1, 200, Jr.)
CB	**Cole Luke** (5-11, 193, Sr.)
	Shaun Crawford (5-9, 180, So.)
FS	**Max Redfield** (6-1, 205, Sr.)
	Devin Studstill (6-0, 190, Fr.)
SS	**Drue Tranquill** (6-2, 225, Jr.)
	Avery Sebastian (5-10, 200, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Justin Yoon** (5-10, 190, So.)
P	**Tyler Newsome** (6-3, 210, Jr.)

Sporting News All-American

BYU
COUGARS

QB Tanner Mangum

BOWL PROJECTION: Poinsettia Bowl

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	Arizona*	
S.10	@UTAH	28-35
S.17	UCLA	23-24
S.24	West Virginia**	
S.30	Toledo	
O.8	@MICHIGAN STATE	
O.14	Mississippi State	
O.20	@BOISE STATE	35-24
N.5	@CINCINNATI	38-24
N.12	Southern Utah	
N.19	Massachusetts	
N.26	Utah State	51-28

At Glendale, AZ
***At Landover, MD*

COACH

Kalani Sitake
First year

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Ty Detmer (first year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR:
Ilaisa Tuiaki (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-4
(Lost to Utah in the Las Vegas Bowl, 35-28)
STADIUM: LaVell Edwards Stadium (63,470)
TICKETS: 801-422-BYU-1
SITE: Provo, Utah
WEBSITE: byucougars.com
TWITTER: @BYUfootball

After serving as the defensive coordinator at Utah, Oregon State and Southern Utah over the past decade, Kalani Sitake was handed the reins as the head football coach at Brigham Young University last December when longtime coach Bronco Mendenhall left to be the head man at Virginia.

In the process, Sitake, a former BYU fullback, was also handed the most brutal schedule in Cougar history, and perhaps one of the most difficult schedules in all of college football for 2016.

The independent Cougars will play three Pac-12 schools (Arizona, Utah, UCLA), a Big 12 school (West Virginia), a Big Ten school (Michigan State), an SEC school (Mississippi State) along with Boise State and MAC power Toledo. That's BYU's first eight games and, after that, Sitake and the Cougars could be staggering. They won't get any breathers until November when Southern Utah and UMass come to Provo.

At least Sitake wasn't left with an empty cupboard by Mendenhall, who felt like he had taken the Cougars as far as he could while producing 10 straight winning seasons at BYU.

The Cougars have 16 returning starters and are in great shape at the quarterback position. Tanner Mangum is back after a sensational freshman season during which he completed 59.9 percent of his passes for 3,377 yards and 23 touchdowns and led some memorable comeback victories.

Also back is three-year starter Taysom Hill, who went down with a foot injury in the 2015 season opener and was replaced by Mangum. Hill, who was the starter when he wasn't injured the previous four seasons, had other options as a graduate transfer, but opted to return to BYU for one more year.

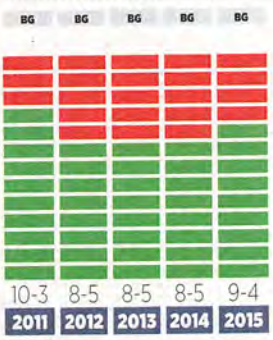
While the Cougars are expected to return to their old passing ways behind the pocket passer Mangum, Hill can give the offense an added dimension with his exceptional running ability. That will be something for new offensive coordinator Ty Detmer, BYU's former Heisman Trophy winner, to figure out.

The Cougars will also welcome back 6-2, 220-pound senior Jamaal Williams, who sat out last season after rushing for 2,526 yards during his first three years at running back in Provo. Algernon Brown, who rushed for 709 yards and 11 touchdowns in Williams' absence, also returns. The receiving corps will be led by Nick Kurtz and Mitchell Juergens, who caught 39 and 37 passes, respectively, last season.

On defense, the Cougars will miss graduated pass-rushing end Bronson Kaufusi and his 11 sacks from last season, but they'll welcome back Travis Tuiloma and Logan Taele on the line, Harvey Langi and Fred Warner at linebacker and Kai Nacua and Michael Davis in the secondary.

–Mike Sorensen

5-YEAR RECORD
43-22



PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Tanner Mangum (6-3, 215, So.)
FB	Algernon Brown (6-1, 245, Sr.)
RB	Jamaal Williams (6-2, 220, Sr.)
LT	Brad Wilcox (6-7, 310, Sr.)
LG	Ului Lapuaho (6-7, 333, Jr.)
C	Parker Dawe (6-3, 301, Sr.)
RG	Tuni Kanuch (6-3, 325, Jr.)
RT	Austin Hoyt (6-8, 282, So.)
TE	Bryan Sampson (6-4, 245, Sr.)
WR	Nick Kurtz (6-6, 210, Sr.)
WR	Mitchell Juergens (5-10, 181, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Tomasi Laulile (6-4, 288, Jr.)
DT	Travis Tuiloma (6-2, 301, Sr.)
DT	Logan Taele (6-2, 299, Sr.)
DE	Sae Tautu (6-4, 245, Sr.)
OLB	Fred Warner (6-4, 227, Jr.)
MLB	Harvey Langi (6-3, 249, Sr.)
OLB	Francis Bernard (6-1, 239, So.)
CB	Troy Warner (6-1, 192, Fr.)
CB	Michael Davis (6-2, 190, Sr.)
FS	Kai Nacua (6-2, 208, Sr.)
SS	Micah Hannemann (6-0, 200, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Austin Brasher (6-0, 183, Sr.)
P	Jonny Linehan (6-0, 201, Sr.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT

247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Troy Warner,** CB ★★★★
2. **Handsome Tanielu,** DT ★★★★
3. **Jonah Trinnaman,** WR ★★★

Brigham Young's top-50 class will get an added boost from six players returning from Mormon missions. The group is led by a pair of four-star prospects in former Oregon commit Troy Warner and one-time Utah commit Handsome Tanielu. It's a class loaded with prospects on the defensive front seven, including six projected linemen and five linebackers.

MANGUM: DANNY MOLOSHOK / AP

ARMY
BLACK KNIGHTS

5-YEAR RECORD
14-46

3-9	2-10	3-9	4-8	2-10
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015

WIN LOSS
CT: Conference Title • **BG:** Bowl Game
NT: National Title

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	**Ahmad Bradshaw** (5-11, 198, Jr.)
RB	**Aaron Kemper** (5-6, 210, Sr.)
RB	**Jordan Asberry** (5-9, 185, So.)
LT	**Tyler Young** (6-2, 255, So.)
LG	**Colby Enegren** (6-2, 279, Sr.)
C	**Bryce Holland** (6-2, 289, Jr.)
RG	**Mike Houghton** (6-4, 284, Jr.)
RT	**Rick Kurz** (6-2, 265, So.)
TE	**Quinten Parker** (6-1, 225, So.)
WR	**Edgar Poe** (6-4, 215, Sr.)
WR	**Jeff Ejekam** (6-2, 199, Jr.)

DEFENSE

DE	**John Voit** (6-3, 247, So.)
NG	**Cordarrell Davis** (6-0, 240, So.)
DE	**Jordan Smith** (6-3, 258, Sr.)
OLB	**Kenneth Brinson** (6-2, 225, So.)
ILB	**Andrew King** (6-0, 246, Sr.)
ILB	**Jeremy Timpf** (6-1, 225, Sr.)
OLB	**Alex Aukerman** (6-1, 228, Jr.)
CB	**Brandon Jackson** (6-0, 170, So.)
CB	**Steven Johnson** (6-0, 191, Sr.)
FS	**Rhyan England** (5-10, 192, Jr.)
SS	**Xavier Moss** (6-2, 197, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	**Nick Schrage** (6-0, 167, So.)
P	**J.D. Mote** (6-5, 211, So.)

Sporting News All-American

RECRUITING REPORT
247SPORTS

TOP SIGNEES — 247 STAR RATING

1. **Kjetil Cline,** WR ★★★
2. **TJ Wisham,** RB ★★★
3. **Ryan Parker,** LB ★★★

The Black Knights are bringing in another national class and were able to hit on some quality talent at key positions. Army had some big success in the South, especially at linebacker, snagging Jake Ellington and Jack King from North Carolina, Joe Ryan from Florida and three-star linebacker Ryan Parker, who was all set to join Notre Dame as a preferred walk-on, from Tennessee.

WR **Edgar Poe**

POE: MATT ROURKE / AP

Teams that often lose several close games during a season usually learn to finish those games the following year. Entering his third year at West Point, coach Jeff Monken hopes that will hold true after Army lost seven games by a touchdown or less in 2015, including two on the game's final play. After using 18 rookies against Fordham in the season opener (only Georgia used more), the Black Knights will have a luxury that service academies often don't benefit from: a bevy of returning starters–seven on offense, nine on defense.

Army returns two quarterbacks who earned starts in 2015. Junior Ahmad Bradshaw began the season as the starter, amassing 468 rushing yards, 429 passing yards and 10 total touchdowns in eight games played. Sophomore Chris Carter started the final two games of the season, throwing (140 yards) and running (111) for more than 100 yards in his debut against Rutgers. Carter passed for 208 yards against archrival Navy–becoming the first Army quarterback since Carson Williams in 2007 to pass for 200 yards in a game–and nearly leading the Cadets to an upset before falling, 21-17, to the Midshipmen.

Whoever wins the quarterback job will have the luxury of throwing to 6-4, 215-pound senior wideout Edgar Poe, who hauled in 16 passes for 441 yards and six touchdowns last season. Poe's six scores were the most for a Cadet receiver since Jeremy Trimble scored seven times in 2007. Against Navy, Poe had five catches for 121 yards and a touchdown.

The Black Knights ranked 12th in the country in rushing last season, averaging 244.3 yards per game, which is their lowest output since 2010 (251.6). Stocky senior running back Aaron Kemper (5-6, 210 pounds) led the team with 544 rushing yards, including a career-high 147 yards in Army's 58-36 victory at Eastern Michigan. Sophomore Jordan Asberry (213 rushing yards) also returns in the backfield.

Senior linebackers Jeremy Timpf and Andrew King tied for the team lead with 92 tackles each. Timpf, named a co-captain as a junior last season, also led the 2014 team in tackles and has started every game over the last two seasons. King recorded 16.5 tackles for loss–the most since current Indianapolis Colts linebacker Josh McNary had 22.5 in 2009–and led the team with 4.5 sacks.

The Black Knights must replace kicker Daniel Grochowski, Army's all-time leader in extra points, and punter Alex Tardieu, who averaged 40.2 yards per punt and landed 13 boots inside the 20-yard line last season.

–Will Long

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.2	@TEMPLE	
S.10	Rice	31-38
S.17	@UTEP	
S.24	@BUFFALO	
O.8	@DUKE	3-44
O.15	Lafayette	
O.22	North Texas	
O.29	@WAKE FOREST	14-17
N.5	Air Force	3-20
N.12	Notre Dame*	
N.19	Morgan State	
D.10	Navy**	17-21

**At San Antonio, TX*
***At Baltimore, MD*

COACH

Jeff Monken
Third year (6-18)
CAREER RECORD: 44-34

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Brent Davis (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Jay Bateman (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 2-10
STADIUM: Michie Stadium (38,000)
TICKETS: 877-TIX-ARMY
SITE: West Point, N.Y.
WEBSITE: goarmywestpoint.com
TWITTER: @ArmyWP_Football

UMASS
MINUTEMEN

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@FLORIDA	
S.10	Boston College*	
S.17	Fla. International	24-14
S.24	Mississippi State*	
O.1	Tulane*	
O.8	@OLD DOMINION	
O.15	Louisiana Tech*	
O.22	@SOUTH CAROLINA	
O.29	Wagner	
N.5	@TROY	
N.19	@BYU	
N.26	@HAWAII	

At Foxboro, MA

COACH

Mark Whipple
Ninth year (55-44)
CAREER RECORD: 126-78

OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mark Whipple (third year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Tom Masella (third year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 3-9
STADIUM: McGuirk Alumni Stadium (17,000) and Gillette Stadium (66,829)
TICKETS: 866-UMASS-TIX
SITE: Amherst, Mass.
WEBSITE: umassathletics.com
TWITTER: @UMassFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Ross Comis (6-0, 208, So.)
FB	Andrew Libby (6-1, 230, Jr.)
RB	Marquis Young (6-0, 196, So.)
LT	Elijah Wilkinson (6-5, 328, Sr.)
LG	Lukas Kolter (6-4, 327, Jr.)
C	Fabian Hoeller (6-3, 298, Sr.)
RG	Michael Boland (6-6, 323, Sr.)
RT	Jack Driscoll (6-5, 263, Fr.)
TE	Shaquille Harris (6-2, 231, Jr.)
WR	Shakur Nesmith (6-5, 205, Jr.)
WR	Brennon Dingle (5-10, 170, Fr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Enock Asante (6-2, 262, Sr.)
NT	Jake Largay (6-5, 319, So.)
DT	Peter Angeh (6-1, 263, Sr.)
OLB	Zeke Edmonds (6-0, 209, Jr.)
ILB	Shane Huber (6-3, 228, Jr.)
ILB	J. Robinson-Woodgett (6-1, 242, Sr.)
OLB	Peter Ngobidi (6-2, 218, Sr.)
CB	James Oliphant (5-8, 156, So.)
CB	Martin Mangram (5-11, 180, Fr.)
FS	Khary Bailey-Smith (6-2, 198, Sr.)
SS	Jesse Monteiro (5-8, 178, Jr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Mike Caggiano (5-11, 165, So.)
P	Logan Laurent (6-4, 210, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Massachusetts made a multimillion dollar gamble when the university elevated its football program to the FBS level.

So far, it hasn't paid off.

Four years into the project, UMass has fielded one of the worst teams in the FBS, has an 8-40 record overall and is already seeking a new league after playing in the MAC. While promise has conceded to resignation for some Minutemen faithful, the program will move forward–for now–as an FBS independent.

Blake Frohnapfel, a two-year starter at quarterback, has moved on and, while sophomore Ross Comis appears to be the favorite to replace him, junior-college transfer Andrew Ford, who started his career at Virginia Tech, will get the opportunity to earn the job during training camp. Sophomore tailback Marquis Young has big-play ability and, after rushing for 960 yards and seven touchdowns last season, expect more from him as a receiver out of the backfield. In the passing game, however, replacing wideout Tajae Sharpe (111 catches last season) and tight end Rodney Mills will be nearly impossible and no receiver on the current roster finished with more than 15 catches a year ago.

Defense is a troublesome area for the Minutemen, who ranked 103rd nationally in total yardage given up last season. Free safety Khary Bailey-Smith is back after missing all but two games with an injury and will be the anchor of the secondary. If the front three can stop the run and mount a pass rush without a lot of help, it will take pressure off of a back eight that is inexperienced and lacking depth. Coach Mark Whipple likes his defensive front, but only tackle Peter Angeh returns on the line. Senior Enock Asante, who started three games last year, will take over at end, while converted offensive lineman Jake Largay takes over at nose. Linebacker is a real concern because all four starters must be replaced. *–Rodney McKissic*

COASTAL CAROLINA
CHANTICLEERS

2016 SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	2015 RESULT
S.3	@LAMAR	
S.10	Florida A&M	
S.17	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	
S.24	Furman	38-35
O.1	Charleston Southern	25-33
O.15	@GARDNER-WEBB	46-0
O.22	Central Connecticut State	
O.29	@PRESBYTERIAN	24-17
N.5	Monmouth	23-20
N.12	Bryant	31-17
N.17	Liberty	21-24
N.26	Hampton	

COACH

Joe Moglia
Fifth year (41-13)
CAREER RECORD: 41-13
OFFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Dave Patenaude (fifth year)
DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR: Mickey Matthews (first year)

FAST FACTS

2015 RECORD: 9-3
(Lost to Citadel in the first round of the FCS Playoffs, 41-38)
STADIUM: Brooks Stadium (9,400)
TICKETS: 877-424-2687
SITE: Conway, S.C.
WEBSITE: goccusports.com
TWITTER: @CoastalFootball

PROJECTED STARTERS

OFFENSE

QB	Josh Stilley (6-1, 205, So.)
RB	De'Angelo Henderson (5-8, 205, Sr.)
LT	Voghens Larrieux (6-5, 290, Sr.)
LG	William Walker (6-1, 300, Sr.)
C	Dom DiGalbo (6-2, 270, Sr.)
RG	Sam Ekwonike (6-2, 350, Sr.)
RT	Chase Tidwell (6-5, 275, Sr.)
TE	A.J. Sattinger (6-1, 225, Jr.)
WR	Chris Jones (5-11, 170, Jr.)
WR	Devin Brown (5-8, 170, Sr.)
WR	Bruce Mapp (6-0, 210, Sr.)

DEFENSE

DE	Ed Brown (6-2, 235, Sr.)
DT	Dwayne Price (6-2, 270, Jr.)
DT	Jabarai Bothwell (5-11, 290, Sr.)
DE	Marcus Williamson (6-3, 235, Jr.)
WLB	Fitz Wattley (5-11, 200, So.)
MLB	Shane Johnson (6-1, 215, Jr.)
SLB	Alex Scearce (6-3, 220, Sr.)
CB	Anthony Chesley (5-11, 180, So.)
CB	Kamron Summers (5-11, 185, Sr.)
S	Richie Sampson (6-2, 195, Sr.)
S	Austin Murillo (5-10, 185, Sr.)

SPECIALISTS

K	Ryan Granger (5-11, 175, Sr.)
P	Evan Rabon (6-0, 150, So.)

Sporting News All-American

Since starting football in 2003, Coastal Carolina has been the Big South Conference's bellwether program. Coastal was the first Big South team to qualify for the FCS playoffs, the first to reach the FCS quarterfinals and first to be ranked No. 1 in the polls.

Though it was long known that Big South partner Liberty had aspirations to move to the FBS, Coastal Carolina was the first program to take the plunge, accepting an invitation to join the Sun Belt Conference last September. The Chanticleers will become a Sun Belt all-sports member in July, but its football program will operate in a transitional state this season as it builds toward 85 scholarships.

Coastal is ineligible for the 2016 FCS playoffs since it will have more than 63 scholarship players; it's also not eligible for FBS bowl participation this year. In its current state of limbo between the two divisions, CCU will play an all-FCS schedule. The Chants will play a full Sun Belt schedule starting in 2017.

Coastal will also be transitioning to a new voice under center, as All-American Alex Ross, who threw for 3,009 yards and 21 touchdowns last season, has moved on. Sophomore Josh Stilley is in line to take over at quarterback, though he has thrown only two passes in his CCU career. He'll have a run game to fall back on, as top backs De'Angelo Henderson (1,346 rushing yards, 16 TDs) and Osharmar Abercrombie (502, 7) return.

Coastal also features one of the nation's most dynamic kick returners in Devin Brown, who doubles as a slot receiver and ran back two kickoffs for TDs last year, including a 100-yarder.

Defensively, the Chanticleers will lean on linebacker Alex Scearce (team-leading 79 tackles) and tackle Jabarai Bothwell (8.5 tackles for loss). They'll also welcome back safety Richie Sampson, a former second-team All-Big South choice who missed all of 2015 with an injury.

–Chris Lang

Broken record

The act is getting old, but the NDSU Bison aren't giving any indication their current streak of five straight titles will be eclipsed anytime soon.

BY WILL LONG
Assistant Editor

It sounds like a broken record at this point, but the North Dakota State Bison keep steamrolling through the Football Championship Subdivision. Led by quarterback Brock Jensen and coach Craig Bohl, the Bison won three national titles from 2011-13. In 2014, Chris Klieman succeeded Bohl on the sidelines and entrusted Carson Wentz under center. The results? Two more national titles in 2014-15.

With Wentz off to the NFL, North Dakota State will pass the reins to Easton Stick. And the Bison were able to get a head start on that in 2015 after Wentz suffered a broken wrist in late October. In eight starts last season–all wins–Stick led NDSU to 37.1 points per game. With 14 returning starters, one of the nation's best running games and one of the top defenses, North Dakota State, which is 71-5 since 2011, should make a run for an unprecedented sixth consecutive national title.

The Missouri Valley and Big Sky are the two deepest leagues, but the biggest challenge will come from Sam Houston State of the Southland Conference. The Bearkats, who lost in the semifinals last year, have fallen in the FCS playoffs to North Dakota State three times in the last five seasons. But coach K.C. Keeler may have the most explosive offense in the country in Huntsville, Texas. McNeese State will also pose a challenge from the Southland, but the Cowboys must replace coach Matt Viator, who took the head job at Louisiana-Monroe during the offseason, from a team that finished 10-1 in 2015.

Jacksonville State looks to be the class of the Ohio Valley after falling to NDSU in the national championship game, but dual-threat quarterback Eli Jenkins had a tumultuous offseason that included an arrest for domestic violence and surgery to repair a torn labrum in his right (throwing) shoulder.

WENTZ, STICK: MIKE STONE / AP

The QB reins at North Dakota State have been passed from Carson Wentz (right) to Easton Stick (left).

The Colonial Athletic Association appears to be stacked, with Richmond, William & Mary, James Madison and New Hampshire all contending for a playoff bid. Villanova coach Andy Talley will roam the sidelines for his 32nd and final season with the Wildcats as he plans to retire at the end of 2016.

In noteworthy offseason news, the Ivy League coaches voted to eliminate full-contact practices during the season, something the "Ancient Eight" already does for spring and preseason practices. In an effort to stay ahead of the curve and avoid concussion issues, the Ivy is hoping the trend grows across the sport.

For the second straight year, the MEAC and SWAC champions will participate in the Celebration Bowl on Dec. 17. But teams from those HBCU leagues that don't earn a berth in that game will still be eligible for an at-large berth to the FCS playoffs.

The FCS continues to have success against Football Bowl Subdivision schools, posting nine wins in 2015. Portland State's 66-7 victory over North Texas was the largest margin ever by an FCS team over an FBS team, while three members of Power Five conferences lost to FCS teams. Portland State defeated Pac-12 member Washington State, 24-17, becoming the first FCS team to win two games over FBS teams since North Dakota State in 2007. Meanwhile, South Dakota State upended Big 12 foe Kansas, 41-38, and The Citadel shocked SEC member South Carolina, 23-22.

FCS PRESEASON TOP 25

1. North Dakota State
2. Sam Houston State
3. Richmond
4. Northern Iowa
5. Jacksonville State
6. William & Mary
7. McNeese State
8. Chattanooga
9. Eastern Washington
10. Illinois State
11. James Madison
12. South Dakota State
13. Northern Arizona
14. Charleston Southern
15. Montana
16. Western Illinois
17. Portland State
18. New Hampshire
19. Wofford
20. North Dakota
21. The Citadel
22. North Carolina A&T
23. Weber State
24. Central Arkansas
25. Eastern Illinois

FCS ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	**Case Cookus**, Northern Arizona, So.
RB	**Kade Harrington**, Lamar, Sr.
RB	**Chase Edmonds**, Fordham, Jr.
OL	**Mitch Kirsch**, James Madison, Sr.
OL	**Corey Levin**, Chattanooga, Sr.
OL	**Casey Dunn**, Jacksonville State, Sr.
OL	**Zack Johnson**, North Dakota State, Sr.
OL	**Erik Austell**, Charleston Southern, Sr.
TE	**Derrick Griffin**, Texas Southern, So.
WR	**Cooper Kupp**, Eastern Washington, Sr.
WR	**Jake Wieneke**, South Dakota State, Jr.

DEFENSE

DL	**P.J. Hall**, Sam Houston State, Jr.
DL	**Derek Rivers**, Youngstown State, Sr.
DL	**Karter Schult**, Northern Iowa, Sr.
DL	**Keionta Davis**, Chattanooga, Sr.
LB	**Christian Kuntz**, Duquesne, Sr.
LB	**Nick DeLuca**, North Dakota State, Sr.
LB	**Kourtney Berry**, Alabama State, Sr.
DB	**Dee Delaney**, The Citadel, Jr.
DB	**Donald Payne**, Stetson, Sr.
DB	**David Jones**, Richmond, Sr.
DB	**Casey DeAndrade**, New Hampshire, Sr.

SPECIALISTS

K	**Nick Dorka**, William & Mary, Jr.
P	**Chris Fraser**, Cornell, Sr.
RS	**Khris Gardin**, North Carolina A&T, Jr.

BIG SKY

BIGSKYCONF.COM

EWU Eagles back to fly atop Sky

BY MIKE SORENSEN
The (Salt Lake City) Deseret News

The Big Sky Conference dominated all the postseason honors for FCS football in 2015, becoming the first conference to ever win awards for the division's best offensive player, defensive player, freshman and coach.

However, that didn't translate into success in the FCS playoffs as the Big Sky came up short, with no league teams making the FCS quarterfinals for the first time in 10 years. Southern Utah and Portland State each lost their opening postseason games.

After a good start last year, **Eastern Washington** (6-5, 5-3 Big Sky) finished last season on a three-game losing streak, keeping the Eagles out of the FCS playoffs for only the second time in six years. With 54 lettermen back, however, including 14 starters (5 offense, 9 defense), the Eagles could be the team to beat in a crowded field of contenders.

Cooper Kupp was not only the league's offensive MVP but the national Offensive Player of the Year, a rarity for a wide receiver. The three-time All-American is back, along with 6-4 senior quarterback Jordan West, who threw for 3,002 yards and 30 touchdowns. The EWU defense will be anchored by end Samson Ebukam and noseguard Matthew Sommer, two seniors who earned All-Big Sky honors last year.

Northern Arizona (7-4, 5-3) came on strong late in the season, winning four of its last five games while averaging 54 points during a stretch that included a 52-30 whipping of then-No. 4 Eastern Washington. The Lumberjacks return the FCS Freshman of the Year, quarterback Case Cookus, who completed 69 percent of his passes for 3,117 yards and 37 touchdowns with just five interceptions. His main receiver, 6-3, 210-pound junior Emmanuel Butler (64 catches, 1,208 yards, 15 TDs), is back to catch his throws.

Bob Stitt got **Montana** (8-5, 6-2) back in the playoffs in his first year as head coach and looks to do the same in 2016. Big quarterback Brady Gustafson, a 6-7, 230-pound redshirt senior who missed six games with a leg injury, should be healthy and allow Makena Simis, who started three games under center in his absence, to be moved to wide receiver. The Grizzlies lost FCS Defensive Player of the Year Tyrone Holmes, who had 18 sacks and 24 tackles for loss from his end position last year, but they return tackle Caleb Kidder, who had 82 tackles in 2015.

Portland State (9-3, 6-2) returns 14 starters from a 9-3 team that made the FCS playoffs under first-year coach Bruce Barnum, who was named FCS Coach of the Year after beginning the season on an interim basis. Quarterback Alex Kuresa, who passed for 1,975 yards and rushed for 755 last season, returns to lead the offense, while all-league cornerback Xavier Coleman is the most experienced player for a defense that was depleted by graduation.

For years, **North Dakota** (7-4, 5-3) has played in the shadow of FCS power North Dakota State, but the Fighting Hawks are closing the gap. Last year they finished 7-4, just missing a playoff berth. With quarterback Keaton Studsrud returning along with nine defensive starters, including linebacker Brian Labat and safety Cole Reyes, this might be the year UND makes the postseason.

Keep an eye on **Weber State** (6-5, 5-3), which has made great strides under coach Jay Hill since he inherited a 2-10 team three years ago. The Wildcats return 17 starters, plus linebacker Emmett Tela, who sat out with an injury last year. Quarterback Jadrian Clark, leading receiver Cameron Livingston and the top two rushers, running backs Eric Wilkes and Treshawn Garrett, all return.

Cal Poly (4-7, 3-5) and its triple-option offense led the nation in rushing for the third straight year at 387.3 yards per game last season, but the Mustangs may have a tough time finishing high in the standings after losing leading rusher and passer Chris Brown at quarterback. Running backs Kori Garcia (780 yards rushing) and Joe Protheroe (779), both of whom earned all-league honors last year, return to give Cal Poly a formidable running game, however.

Northern Colorado (6-5, 3-5) is coming off its first winning season as a Division 1 program with hopes for bigger things in 2016. Quarterback Jacob Knipp, who threw for 1,998 yards and 13 touchdowns last year, is back along with all-league safety Taylor Risner and wideouts/return specialists Hakeem Deggs and Ellis Onic II.

Montana State (5-6, 3-5) hired University of Washington assistant Jeff Choate to replace longtime Bobcats head coach Rob Ash and he'll try to rebuild a program that has long been one of the league's best. Running backs Chad Newell and Gunnar Brekke are back along with receivers Mitchell Herbert and Justin Paige to pace the offense.

Southern Utah (8-4, 7-1), last year's surprise Big Sky champion, has a rough road ahead to repeat as champs. The Thunderbirds lost quarterback Ammon Olsen, All-America defensive end James Cowser as well as coach Ed Lamb, who left to become the assistant head coach at BYU. Demario Warren has taken over as head coach after serving as SUU's defensive coordinator.

After a down year, **Sacramento State** (2-9, 1-7) shook things up on the coaching staff in the offseason and will rely on senior running back Jordan Robinson (809 rushing yards in 2015) while three experienced quarterbacks (Kolney Cassel, Daniel Kniffin and Nate Ketteringham) will fight for the starting job under center.

Big things were expected last year at **Idaho State** (2-9, 1-7), but the Bengals fell flat. After graduating several top players and experiencing a shakeup of the coaching staff, the Bengals may struggle to win many games this year. Tanner Gueller saw a lot of action as a redshirt freshman and should be the quarterback.

UC Davis (2-9, 2-6) returns senior quarterback Ben Scott, leading receiver and rusher Manusamoa Luuga plus eight defensive starters, but the Aggies will be hard-pressed to crack the upper division of the conference.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Eastern Washington**
2. **Northern Arizona**
3. **Montana**
4. **Portland State**
5. **North Dakota**
6. **Weber State**
7. **Cal Poly**
8. **Northern Colorado**
9. **Montana State**
10. **Southern Utah**
11. **Sacramento State**
12. **Idaho State**
13. **UC Davis**

KUPP: PATRICK RECORD / AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Cooper Kupp
WR, Eastern Washington

The 6-2, 215-pound speedster was the 2015 Walter Payton Award winner as well as 2015 FCS Offensive Player of the Year by several outlets. He has started all 39 games during his career, catching 311 passes for 4,764 yards and accounting for 58 total touchdowns.

Bucs prohibitive favorite in shrinking league

BY CHRIS LANG
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

The road to the Big South title ultimately still goes through South Carolina.

Coastal Carolina stunned the league by joining the Sun Belt Conference last summer, a departure that left the Big South barely clinging to its automatic bid to the FCS playoffs.

Of the conference's six remaining members, the minimum to retain automatic qualifying status, two are associates (Monmouth and Kennesaw State). Campbell, a Big South member in most sports, plays in the non-scholarship Pioneer but has shown little interest in joining the scholarship ranks. None of the conference's other five all-sports members are close to adding football.

The door is open for Charleston Southern to take the lead as a perennial conference favorite. The Buccaneers advanced to the FCS quarterfinals in 2015 before losing to eventual runner-up Jacksonville State, and they return a host of talent from that squad. With Liberty reloading after a mediocre season, CSU enters the season as the prohibitive favorite to repeat.

It can be argued **Charleston Southern** (10-3, 6-0 Big South) arrived a year early. The Buccaneers are poised to have their best year in program history, thanks to a physical offensive line, a three-pronged running attack (featuring Darius Hammond, Mike Holloway and Ben Robinson) and a sturdy defense. Kyle Copeland, a 6-1 junior, is the favorite to take over for Austin Brown at quarterback in CSU's read-option offense. Defensively, the Bucs lost leaders in linebacker Aaron Brown and cornerback Malcolm Jackson, but the strength up front will allow time for the back end to develop.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Charleston Southern**
2. **Liberty**
3. **Monmouth**
4. **Kennesaw State**
5. **Gardner-Webb**
6. **Presbyterian**

TOP NFL PROSPECT

JaRon Greene
NG, Liberty

At 6-2 and 310 pounds, the Beaumont, Texas, product has a mix of pile-driving size and surprising athleticism that will make him an attractive commodity come next spring. Greene's pure statistical numbers won't wow you, but his ability to engage opposing linemen and open opportunities for teammates will.

The biggest offseason coup for CSU was retaining rising-star coach Jamey Chadwell, who was courted by bigger programs but ultimately stayed put. The Bucs will find out early how far they've come when they play in the FCS kickoff game Aug. 27 at five-time defending national champion North Dakota State.

The 2015 season was a total mystery for **Liberty** (6-5, 3-3). The Flames beat Montana and Coastal Carolina at home but crippling losses at Gardner-Webb and Monmouth ruined any chance they had at earning a second straight FCS playoff berth. Fifth-year head coach Turner Gill made some staff changes, most notably elevating quarterbacks coach Joe Dailey to offensive coordinator. If there was a time to make a systematic change, this was probably it. Quarterback Josh Woodrum and Darrin Peterson, the school's record-holder in just about every receiving category, are gone. Liberty was young on defense last season and must replace talented rush end Chima Uzowihe. Kicker John Lunsford, who nailed several field goals of 55 yards or longer during his career, is gone as well. The Flames face a daunting schedule that includes a trip to Virginia Tech and a home game with 2015 FCS runner-up Jacksonville State.

Monmouth (5-6, 3-3) made significant strides on the field in 2015, beating Liberty and nearly knocking off Coastal Carolina at home. Now the Hawks are set to make some off-field strides, as construction on a new stadium to replace outdated Kessler Field was approved in February. Construction is set to begin at the end of this season and the facility is expected to be ready for the 2017 home opener against Lafayette. Monmouth is still working its way toward the full FCS allotment of 63 scholarships, but the talent is there to compete now. Running back Lavon Chaney will work behind a retooled offensive line. Quarterback Cody Williams returns after a strong freshman campaign. The defense will be bolstered by the return of end Darnell Leslie and All-America candidate Mike Basile in the secondary.

Coach Brian Bohannon used a smart scheduling philosophy to instill confidence in his first-year program last year at **Kennesaw State** (6-5, 2-4). Just about everyone who matters is back for an Owls squad that was filled with first- and second-year players in 2015. Quarterback Trey White leads Kennesaw's tricky triple-option offense that averaged 293 yards per game on the ground in 2015. He'll need to improve as a passer—and the running backs must get better as well—if the Owls want to take the step from competitive upstart to contender.

Gardner-Webb (4-7, 2-4) thought it had turned the corner offensively last year when it stunned Liberty 34-20 at home to open the Big South season. That proved to be a fluke, though, as GWU managed to score just 58 points in its final six games, 28 of them coming against first-year program East Tennessee State. The Runnin' Bulldogs ranked 119th nationally in scoring offense at 12.8 points per game, rendering some pretty nice defensive numbers moot. Mike Estes is one of the better FCS tight ends, but unless the quarterback and running back play improves, Gardner-Webb will likely be near the bottom of the Big South standings again.

Presbyterian (2-9, 1-5) took a big step backward last year after its winning 2014 campaign. First-team All-Big South running back Darrell Bridges anchors the offense after rushing for 1,065 yards last season, but he'll need help from the passing game. The Blue Hose ranked dead last among 123 FCS teams in total offense, passing efficiency and first downs. Coach Harold Nichols had hoped the days of playing multiple paycheck games were over, but PC has Central Michigan, Florida and transitional FBS member Coastal Carolina on the schedule, plus FCS power Chattanooga.

Fast-rising Charleston Southern coach **Jamey Chadwell** (right) congratulates Alabama's Nick Saban after a loss to the Crimson Tide last season.

CHADWELL: BUTCH DILL / AP

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CAA

Get ready for the rushers to rule

BY JOHN O'CONNOR
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The CAA graduates from the "Year of the Quarterback" to the "Year of the Tailback."

Last season, Villanova featured quarterback John Robertson, the 2014 FCS Player of the Year, and James Madison quarterback Vad Lee, who finished fourth in the voting.

Neither of them made it through the season because of injuries. Robertson (knee) was done by mid-September and Lee (foot) didn't play beyond late October.

The league's stars this season are expected to be tailbacks. The list of standouts includes William & Mary's Kendell Anderson (109.1 yards per game in 2015), Towson's Darius Victor (92.8), James Madison's Cardon Johnson (86.4) and Khalid Abdullah (81.3), Delaware's Thomas Jefferson (80.9), New Hampshire's Dalton Crossan (80.5) and Stony Brook's Stacey Bedell, who missed most of 2015 with a shoulder injury but ran for 1,070 yards the year before.

Richmond shared the 2015 CAA championship with William & Mary and James Madison. The success of the Spiders, who lost 33-7 at eventual national champion North Dakota State in the FCS semifinals, came with a junior-laden team that was probably a year ahead of schedule. Richmond needs to replace Jacobi Green, the league's leading rusher (113.9 ypg), but returns most of its other notable players.

James Madison replaced coach Everett Withers, who moved to Texas State after two years in Harrisonburg, with Mike Houston, who boasted a win over FBS South Carolina last year as coach at The Citadel. William & Mary has some defensive holes to fill but should be strong on offense with Anderson's running, veteran Steve Cluley at quarterback and DeVonte Dedmon, a big-play receiver who was the league's top punt returner in 2015.

The four CAA teams that qualified for the playoffs—New Hampshire joined the three Virginia-based programs that shared the championship—were the league's top scoring teams.

New Hampshire qualified for the postseason for the 12th consecutive year, the longest active streak in FCS. This year will be the last on Villanova's sideline for Andy Talley, who's retiring after 32 seasons as the Wildcats' head coach.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Richmond**
2. **William & Mary**
3. **James Madison**
4. **New Hampshire**
5. **Villanova**
6. **Towson**
7. **Stony Brook**
8. **Delaware**
9. **Elon**
10. **Albany**
11. **Maine**
12. **Rhode Island**

Richmond (10-4, 6-2 CAA) was picked fifth in the 2014 CAA preseason poll. Coach Danny Rocco's Spiders steadily improved with quarterback Kyle Lauletta in his first season as a starter. Lauletta, a junior, completed 61.6 percent of his passes for 3,598 yards and triggered the CAA's best pass offense (260.9 yards per game).

Richmond lost both coordinators during the offseason. Charlie Fisher, who ran the offense as associate head coach, became the top man at Western Illinois. Bob Trott, the defensive coordinator, moved to James Madison to work in the same capacity. Rocco hired John Garrett, the brother of Dallas Cowboys head coach Jason Garrett, as OC, while Chris Cosh is the new DC. Both have extensive college experience.

It seems unlikely Richmond will take a step back because of the talent returning. Senior Brian Brown led the league in receiving (111.5 yards per game). Senior safety David Jones (CAA-leading 9 interceptions) and senior linebacker Omar Howard (9.7 tackles per game) were two of the league's most consistent playmakers on defense.

The Spiders' ability to match last season's accomplishment may hinge on their ability to identify a productive runner. The top two rushers from last season, Jacobi Green (1,595 yards) and Seth Fisher (385), graduated.

William & Mary (9-4, 6-2) uncovered a gem in late September last season. Mikal Abdul-Saboor, one of the CAA's best tailbacks, suffered an injury that opened the door for unproven Kendell Anderson. Anderson ended up rushing for 1,418 yards and driving a W&M offense that averaged 30.9 points.

Jimmye Laycock, the Tribe's coach since 1980, starts this season with higher offensive hopes because of the presence of Anderson, senior quarterback Steve Cluley (2,768 passing yards) and junior receiver DeVonte Dedmon, a threat in the passing game (51 catches, 588 yards, 8 TDs) and the CAA's best punt returner (16.4 yards per return).

Junior Nick Dorka made 21 of 25 field-goal attempts and all 47 of his PAT tries.

The Tribe loses two defensive difference-makers in safety DeAndre Houston-Carson, who was also a factor as a kick and punt blocker, and linebacker Luke Rhodes, a four-year starter. Senior end Peyton Gryder (5 sacks, 10 tackles for loss) may be the new defensive leader.

James Madison (9-3, 6-2) has plenty of athleticism in most positions for new coach Mike Houston, who comes to the Dukes after two years at Citadel. Houston succeeds Everett Withers, who left for the head job at FBS Texas State. Houston employed the triple-option at Citadel, but he will go with the same spread offense that has served JMU well.

The Dukes led the FCS with 529 yards per game and averaged 44.3 points. Gone is run-pass threat Vad Lee, the quarterback who keyed that offense and was lost for the season with a foot injury suffered in late October. Bryan Schor, now a junior, started the last four games and passed for seven TDs with one interception.

Houston isn't committed to the same nonstop fast pace on offense that often made the job of the JMU defense very challenging. The Dukes are well-equipped to run, with the tandem of junior Cardon Johnson (86.4 rushing yards per game) and senior Khalid Abdullah (81.3) operating behind a line led by 6-6, 300-pound senior Mitchell Kirsch.

Madison's defense features a pass rusher with great potential in 6-4, 234-pound Andrew Ankrah (10.5 sacks), a junior outside linebacker. Senior linebacker Gage Steele (7.4 tackles per game), junior linebacker Kyre Hawkins (7.9) and senior cornerback Taylor Reynolds are also among the CAA's best defensive players. But the Dukes were not strong along the defensive front last season. Stopping the run topped Houston's offseason to-do list.

New Hampshire (7-5, 5-3) won its last four regular-season games to extend its FCS playoff streak to 12 years, and it's never advisable to underestimate a Sean McDonnell-coached team. The UNH offenses have traditionally been among the most unpredictable and balanced in the CAA, but there may be more running than passing this season, at least early.

That's because of the combination of senior tailback Dalton Crossan (885 rushing yards) and an unclear picture at quarterback. Senior Adam Riese and sophomore Trevor Knight both took snaps last year after an injury to starter Sean Goldrich, who was a senior. Riese is viewed as the probable starter after completing 54 of 79 passes for 513 yards and six TDs.

Senior defensive back Casey DeAndrade (6.3 tackles per game) makes plays against the pass and the run, and is one of the league's top punt returners. Senior end Cam Shorey (7.5 sacks, 12.5 tackles for loss) anchors the defensive front and junior Patrick Mensah (3 INTs) joins DeAndrade in a formidable secondary.

Villanova (6-5, 5-3) will bid adieu at the conclusion of this season to Andy Talley, the Wildcats' coach since 1985 who's retiring. He will be succeeded by Mark Ferrante, who has been a VU assistant for 29 years and coaches the offensive line.

Talley's final team is expected to stay strong on defense with

senior linebackers Austin Calitro (8.2 tackles per game, 4.5 sacks) and Corey Majors (5.2 tackles per game), along with 6-7, 275-pound Tanoh Kpassagnon, who had 6.5 sacks and 9.5 tackles for loss last season.

At quarterback, Zach Bednarczyk started a year ahead of schedule when star John Robertson was lost to a knee injury in September. Bednarczyk shared honors as the CAA's Offensive Rookie of the Year after passing for 1,396 yards and running for 515.

Towson (7-4, 5-3) made an offseason splash by welcoming quarterback Morgan Mahalak, a transfer from Oregon who has three seasons of eligibility remaining. Mahalak, a 6-3 Californian who was a four-star recruit coming out of high school, will join the Tigers for preseason practice.

Mahalak's arrival is expected to elevate a Towson offense that returns senior tailback Darius Victor (1,021 rushing yards). Three Towson linebackers—senior Jordan Mynatt, senior Eric Handy and sophomore Chris Tedder—each averaged five or more tackles, while junior lineman Zain Harps Upshur had four sacks.

Coach Rob Ambrose's team could emerge as the CAA's surprise. The Tigers come into the season with momentum. They won five of their last six games in 2015, primarily with strong defense.

Stony Brook (5-5, 3-5) led the FCS in total defense (250.1 yards per game) and allowed 15.7 points per game. The Seawolves will again be strong on defense, as they always seem to be under coach Chuck Priore, and the return of tailback Stacey Bedell is projected to energize an offense that averaged 17.3 points. Bedell ran for 1,070 yards two years ago and then suffered a season-ending shoulder injury three games into last season. A new quarterback is needed and he'll have a quality target in junior Ray Bolden, a 5-9 Texan who led the CAA with 6.8 receptions per game.

Stony Brook lost pass-rushing specialist Victor Ochi (13 sacks), the CAA's co-Defensive Player of the Year, but returns two other strong defensive linemen in senior Aaron Thompson (10 tackles for loss) and junior Ousmane Camara (5 sacks, 12 tackles for loss) to go with junior defensive back Tyrice Beverette.

Delaware (4-7, 3-5) needs to find a way to effectively throw the ball. The Blue Hens finished last in the FCS in passing (67.1 yards per game) and, in a related matter, averaged 14.9 points. The offensive building block is sophomore tailback Thomas Jefferson, who rushed for 80.9 yards per game. He'll work behind a veteran line led by senior Connor Bozick and junior Brody Kern.

Given the offensive problems, Delaware played well on defense, giving up an average of 20.5 points. The defensive difference-makers are lineman Blaine Woodson and linebacker Charles Bell (8.7 tackles per game). They'll get strong support from two other juniors in lineman Bilal Nichols and cornerback Justin Watson.

Elon (4-7, 3-5) requires an offensive upgrade to reach the CAA's top half. Sticking with one of two sophomore quarterbacks would seem to be the first step. Connor Christiansen and Daniel Thompson both played last season, when the Phoenix averaged 13.4 points per game. Christiansen looked to be taking control of the position late in the year.

The second step of this needed offensive improvement is the development of a running game. Elon averaged 73.5 rushing yards per game, last in the league. The Phoenix offensive line didn't distinguish itself in the pass game either, surrendering 28 sacks. Also, Elon led the league with 28 turnovers.

Coach Rich Skrosky's team will depend on a couple of All-CAA-caliber linebackers, seniors Corey Mitchell (10.5 tackles per game) and John Silas (9.5), and quality defensive backs in junior Chris Blair and senior Adrian McClendon.

Albany (3-8, 2-6) looks to get better on defense around sophomore linebacker Julian Cox, the CAA' co-Defensive Rookie of the Year. Cox, a former high school quarterback and safety, averaged 8.5 tackles, but couldn't keep Albany from finishing last in total defense (410.9 yards per game).

The Great Danes look to advance on offense behind junior quarterback DJ Crook, a former Penn State player who passed for 1,168 yards with eight touchdowns and eight interceptions last season. He worked best with wide receiver Zee Roberson, a 6-2 sophomore who made 46 catches.

Most of the returning standouts on coach Greg Gattuso's team are on defense: senior safety Rayshan Clark (6.9 tackles per game), junior linebacker Malachi Hoskins (5 sacks, 8.5 tackles for loss) and sophomore linebacker DaSharnte Thompson (6.9 tackles per game).

Maine (3-8, 3-5) promoted defensive coordinator Joe Harasymiak, who is now Division I's youngest head coach. He turns 30 during the summer and succeeds the retired Jack Cosgrove, who was the Black Bears' coach for 23 years. Harasymiak inherits a program that's rebuilding on defense and searching for the right combination on offense. Maine returns a CAA star, senior defensive lineman Patrick Ricard, who led the league with 16.5 tackles for loss last season.

Quarterback duties in 2015 were split between returnees Dan Collins and Drew Belcher as the Black Bears averaged 14.9 points per game. Maine has two quality receivers in sophomore Micah Wright (61 catches) and senior Jordan Dunn (56).

Rhode Island (1-10, 1-7) brought in 29 players during February's National Signing Day, about twice as many as most FCS programs annually do. Coach Jim Fleming's team needs help in a lot of places, having finished last among CAA members in scoring (13.2 ppg) and scoring defense (29.9).

A pair of transfer receivers, Sam Benjamin (Temple) and former junior-college player Harold Buckner, will take some pressure off of Harold Cooper and the run game. Cooper, a junior, averaged 74.6 rushing yards per game and led the league in kickoff returns (23.7 yards per return).

The Rams' defense will lean on senior linebacker Adam Parker (8.4 tackles per game).

BROWN: PETE WRIGHT / ICON SPORTSWIRE

↗ TOP NFL PROSPECT

Brian Brown
WR, Richmond

Early in his collegiate career, the soft-spoken Brown became known as the "Silent Assassin" because of his deceptive speed and moves. The 6-1, 198-pound junior averaged 111.5 receiving yards per game last season, when he helped the Spiders reach the FCS semifinals.

IVY LEAGUE

IVYLEAGUESPORTS.COM

Another battle royal on horizon

BY TYLER MILLER
Sporting News Yearbooks staff

Last year, Harvard became just the second school crowned Ivy champs three years in a row, but it came with an asterisk. That asterisk was Pennsylvania and Dartmouth. All three teams finished 6-1 in conference and gave the Ivy tri-champions for the first time since 1982—just the fourth time that's happened in the league's 60 seasons. It's tough to bet against the Harvard pedigree, but key departures could make 2016 an uphill battle.

"This may be the biggest challenge we have faced in my 23 years at Harvard, losing 14 starters, four NFL prospects and the most successful senior class in our Ivy League history," says Crimson coach Tim Murphy.

Hence, it's hard to ignore the momentum at Penn, where Ray Priore became just the seventh head coach in league history to win a conference title in his first season on the sidelines. So the choice here: Quakers by a nose.

Penn (7-3, 6-1 Ivy) surprised prognosticators in 2016 and won a share of its 17th league title, largely due to the play of junior quarterback Alek Torgersen, whose 69.1 completion percentage led the conference and was second best among all FCS passers. All-Ivy receiver Justin Watson compiled a breakout sophomore season, leading the league in receptions (74), receiving yards (1,082) and touchdown catches (9).

Ivy League Defensive Player of the Year Tyler Drake is a rare talent the Quakers must replace at linebacker after finishing last season with 80 tackles and a conference-leading 8.5 sacks. Look for senior Donald Panciello, who was honorable mention All-Ivy in 2015, to step into Drake's leadership and play-making role in the middle of the Penn defense.

Harvard (9-1, 6-1) finished with the sixth-best offense in the FCS last season, averaging 303.5 yards per game behind graduated quarterback Scott Hosch, who led the Ivy in passing yards per game (282.7) and touchdowns (22). The battle to replace him will be between sophomore Tom Stewart and 6-5, 215-pound senior Joe Viviano, who was competing to be the starter last preseason but broke his toe and missed the entire year. Their success in filling Hosch's shoes will go a long way in determining if Harvard has the juice to bring home another title.

The Crimson will also miss running back Paul Stanton Jr., as he departs after leading the Ivy in almost every rushing category. The offense does, however, return the Ivy's reigning Rookie of the Year in wide receiver Justice Shelton-Mosley, who finished 2015 with 589 receiving yards and six touchdowns and another 331 yards in kick returns.

A defense that gave up just 13 points per game last season loses its core three linebackers along with two starting defensive backs. Looking to make a big impact this season are junior linebacker Luke Hutton and two-time All-Ivy defensive back Sean Ahern.

Yale's (6-4, 3-4) injury-riddled offense sputtered last season, averaging 23.5 points per game. That was a far cry from the 2014 team, which was first in FCS total offense. The Bulldogs will miss graduated quarterback Morgan Roberts, who departed New Haven as the school's all-time leader in passing yards (6,182), total offense (6,494) and completion percentage (.610) while finishing second in career passing touchdowns (37), attempts (868) and completions (530). Remaining in the Yale backfield, however, will be junior running back Deshawn Salter (561 rushing yards, 7 TDs), and the Bulldogs are anxious to get a full, healthy season from former N.C. State starter Bo Hines, a speedy junior wideout who was limited to playing two games last year because of injuries.

Four All-Ivy selections return on defense, highlighted by first-team tackle Copache Tyler (5.5 tackles for loss in 2015) and cornerback Spencer Rymiszewski, who had 49 tackles and four interceptions last year after recovering from a spinal-cord concussion in 2014. Also returning for his senior campaign is elected captain and linebacker Darius Manora (52 tackles last year).

Dartmouth (9-1, 6-1) is set to prove that last season was no fluke, but seven All-Ivy defenders have graduated. Linebacker Folarin Orimolade is the top returning tackler (36) and finished second in sacks (8.0) among Ivy defensive players last season. Lucas Bavaro, son of former NFL tight end Mark Bavaro, is coming off a strong junior campaign in the Dartmouth secondary, making 33 tackles. The Big Green led the Ivy in scoring defense and total defense last year.

All-time Dartmouth passing leader Dalyn Williams graduated along with receivers Ryan McManus and Victor Williams, who finished third and fifth on the school's all-time receptions list, respectively. The favorite to succeed Williams at QB is Bruce Dixon IV, an athletic 6-4, 230-pound sophomore from North Carolina. Returning running back Ryder Stone led the Big Green ground attack with 375 yards and a team-high eight rushing touchdowns last year as a sophomore. The top returning options at wideout are seniors Houston Brown (4 receiving TDs) and Jon Marc Carrier (23 catches).

A **Brown** (5-5, 3-4) offense that averaged 27.9 points per game last season will have some significant spots to fill with the graduations of quarterback Marcus Fuller (13 TD passes) and wide receiver Troy Doles (7 TD catches). Back on offense, however, is first-team All-Ivy senior wide receiver Alexander Jette, who averaged 92.8 yards a game on 68 catches in 2015.

Defensively, the Bears graduated leading tackler and All-Ivy linebacker William Twyman, but they retain the services of second-team All-Ivy end Richard Jarvis (6.5 tackles for loss).

Princeton (5-5, 2-5) looks to continue its recent trend of piling up yardage, as the Tigers were second in Ivy total offense last year with 413.6 yards per game. Much of that was thanks to do-everything QB John Lovett, an all-purpose-type player who tied for the league lead with 10 touchdowns (9 rushing, 1 receiving) and added three more passing. Also returning to boost the offense is running back Joe Rhattigan, who averaged 68 yards rushing per game on the way to being a second-team All-Ivy choice in 2015. Defensively, the Tigers return seven of their top 10 tacklers, including the top two in safety Dorian Williams and linebacker Luke Catarius. Second-team All-Ivy Henry Schlossberg, a 6-4, 280-pound senior, is back to anchor the defensive front.

Columbia (2-8, 1-6) improved upon its winless 2014 campaign and even captured a big upset win at Yale, 17-7. The Lions return five of their top six tacklers from 2015, including the top two—linebacker Keith Brady and defensive back Christian Conway.

Cornell (1-9, 1-6) emerged victorious in just one game last season, a 3-0 victory over Columbia. It doesn't look to get any easier for the Big Red offense as it tries to replace first-team All-Ivy running back Luke Hagy (713 yards rushing in 2015).

THE IVY LEAGUE

PREDICTIONS

1. **Penn**
2. **Harvard**
3. **Yale**
4. **Dartmouth**
5. **Brown**
6. **Princeton**
7. **Columbia**
8. **Cornell**

WATSON: STEVE NURENBERG / ICON SPORTSWIRE

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Justin Watson
WR, Penn

The 6-3, 210-pound junior may have the highest ceiling of any player in the league coming off a breakout sophomore campaign that saw him rank first in the conference in receptions (74), receiving yards (1,082) and touchdowns (9). Watson doubled his output from a record-setting freshman season that included 42 receptions for 497 yards. With experienced and efficient passer Alek Torgersen back to deliver him the ball, there should be nothing holding Watson back from further improvement.

Tar Heel titans to battle for title

BY LUT WILLIAMS
Black College Sports Page

North Carolina A&T gave the MEAC a rousing end to the 2015 season with a 41-34 win over SWAC champion Alcorn State in the inaugural Celebration Bowl. The big-game postseason atmosphere in Atlanta, a crowd of more than 35,000 and $1 million payout to the teams from ESPN were tangible indications that giving up its automatic FCS playoff berth paid off.

Prior to those festivities inside Atlanta's Georgia Dome, the league staged another spirited race and crowned three co-champs—N.C. A&T, North Carolina Central and Bethune-Cookman—a year after having an unprecedented five co-champs. Expect another down-to-the-wire title chase in 2016 with South Carolina State, Norfolk State and Hampton poised to join the fray.

PREDICTIONS

1. **North Carolina A&T**
2. **North Carolina Central**
3. **Bethune-Cookman**
4. **South Carolina State**
5. **Norfolk State**
6. **Hampton**
7. **Morgan State**
8. **Delaware State**
9. **Howard**
10. **Florida A&M**
11. **Savannah State**

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Tarik Cohen
RB, North Carolina A&T

Back-flip catches aside, Cohen is a pint-sized Adrian Peterson (5-6, 173 pounds) who makes up for what he lacks in stature with game-breaking speed, toughness and play-making ability. The senior from Bunn, N.C., is also a home-run hitter, as his TD runs of 74, 83 and 73 yards in last year's Celebration Bowl and 10 scoring plays averaging 60 yards in his career attest.

North Carolina A&T (10-2, 7-1 MEAC) boasts three returning FCS All-Americans in running back Tarik Cohen, 6-7, 280-pound offensive lineman Brandon Parker and punt returner Khris Gardin. Coming off 1,543 rushing yards, the diminutive Cohen is looking for his fourth straight 1,000-yard season and third straight MEAC Player-of-the-Year honor while needing 643 yards to become the league's all-time leading rusher. Gardin and Caleb Gabriel bring speed at wide receiver, where 6-4 Denzel Keyes (39 receptions, 8 TDs) excels at making big catches in the red zone.

Sixth-year coach Rod Broadway will choose between sophomores Lamar Raynard and Kylil Carter at quarterback. Both showed flashes last season. The nationally ranked A&T defense (second in rushing defense, seventh in scoring defense) returns seven starters, led by noseguard Marquis Ragland.

Season-ending wins over rival North Carolina A&T the last two seasons have not only denied the Aggies outright MEAC championships but garnered **North Carolina Central** (8-3, 7-1) a share of those titles in its first two years under coach Jerry Mack. In fact, the Eagles were a chip-shot field goal short of earning the outright title.

Mack will look for more efficiency and production from senior quarterback Malcolm Bell now that top receivers Quentin Atkinson and Khalil Stinson are returning from injuries. Overall, nine offensive starters are back, including running back Dorrel McClain, who rushed for 958 yards and eight touchdowns last season on the way to being named MEAC Freshman of the Year. Former All-America defensive back and kick returner Mike Jones is now healthy and expected to lead the defense after missing eight games last year due to injuries.

The league-title train chugged on for **Bethune-Cookman** (9-2, 7-1) last year under new coach Terry Sims, with the Wildcats winning their fifth MEAC championship in six years. Junior quarterback Larry Brihm gets his chance to lead the league's top offense (445.0 yards per game) with senior running back Michael Jones (562 rushing yards, 7 TDs) and junior wideout Jawill Davis (39 receptions, 788 yards, 6 TDs) back in the fold as his chief weapons. Brihm will get challenges from talented redshirt freshman Akevious Williams and junior-college transfer Anthony Cruz. The defense is strong in the secondary but has issues up front.

A couple of three-point losses kept **South Carolina State** (7-4, 6-2) from joining the championship party last season. Freshman quarterback Caleb York emerged as the Bulldogs' offensive catalyst, but coach Buddy Pough had to restock the offensive cupboard after losing a host of playmakers and linemen. Junior linebacker Darius Leonard is the new defensive leader, replacing graduated lineman and two-time MEAC Defensive Player of the Year Javon Hargrave.

Last season, **Norfolk State** (4-7, 4-4) only lost to the four conference teams ahead of them in the standings and may be ready to pass them. Quarterback Greg Hankerson (2,052 passing yards, 13 TDs) is a legit playmaker who will rely on wide receiver Marcus Taylor, running back Gerard Johnson and offensive lineman Daniel Oladimeji to further improve his numbers this year. Chris Lee, a 6-3, 270-pound junior lineman who had six sacks last year, is the best of nine returning starters on defense.

Hampton (6-5, 5-3) has the league's top returning receiver in Twarn Mixson (59 catches, 1,027 yards, 9 TDs) and an experienced quarterback in 2014 starter Jaylian Williamson, a senior who missed last season. Coach Connell Maynor signed seven linemen, five on offense and two on defense, to answer questions up front.

Former offensive coordinator Fred Farrier takes over the head-coaching reins at **Morgan State** (4-6, 4-4) from Lee Hull, who left in February to take an assistant job with the Indianapolis Colts. Farrier welcomes back former 1,000-yard rusher Herb Walker Jr., who missed last season with eligibility issues. Eight starters return on offense, but there's a glaring hole at QB, where two seniors graduated. The defense has seven starters back, led by linebacker Greg Gibson and lineman Dalonte Jenifer.

Delaware State (1-10, 1-7) found a quarterback last season in sophomore Kobie Lain, who led the Hornets to their only victory with a 32-31 season-ending win over Howard. Seniors Aris Scott (46 receptions, 683 yards) and Malik Golson are a dangerous receiving combination, but the Hornets must improve a woeful running game that averaged only 79.2 yards per game. All-MEAC lineman Gabriel Sherrod and linebackers Rashawn Barrett and Malik Harris anchor the defense.

If there's a strength at **Howard** (1-10, 1-7), it's on defense, where several standouts return. Craig Johnson is an all-league candidate, while former All-MEAC choice Devin Rollins, who missed all of last season with an injury, and 2015 tackles leader Jalen Day are formidable forces at linebacker. Travon Hunt and Kenneth Russ provide additional senior leadership in the secondary. At quarterback, junior Kalen Johnson started the final five games last year as a sophomore and made marked improvement despite playing behind a shaky offensive line.

Academic Progress Rate (APR) problems prevented spring practice and complicates second-year coach Alex Wood's attempt to halt four straight losing seasons at **Florida A&M** (1-10, 1-7). Wood returns 16 starters (nine on offense, seven on defense), signed several junior-college playmakers and 30 recruits overall to complement young talents like running back Devin Bowers and wideout Brandon Norwood.

After three years trying to build the **Savannah State** (1-9, 1-7) program, Earnest Wilson III resigned as head coach at the end of last season to take the top job at Division 2 Elizabeth City State. Longtime Division 3 head coach Erik Raeburn, who was 78-13 and earned five NCAA playoff bids in eight years at Wabash (Ind.), was named as Wilson's replacement in March. One of Raeburn's first jobs will be raising low APR scores that cancelled spring practice. The Tigers return eight starters on offense and nine on defense from a team that showed signs of being competitive at the end of last season.

MISSOURI VALLEY

VALLEY-FOOTBALL.ORG

There's little reason not to be bullish on Bison

BY RANDY REINHARDT
Bloomington (Ill.) Pantagraph

It had to be on the minds of the rest of the Missouri Valley Football Conference early last season.

If North Dakota State does win a fifth straight FCS national championship, at least the Bison will have to break in an inexperienced quarterback in 2016.

That didn't quite work out, as the Bison extended their incredible and unprecedented mastery over the division.

When all-everything quarterback Carson Wentz suffered a broken wrist, freshman Easton Stick stepped in to seamlessly guide NDSU to eight wins in as many starts. Wentz was able to return for the national championship game and led the Bison to a 37-10 triumph over Jacksonville State, taking home his second straight Most Outstanding Player award in the decider.

While the rest of the FCS resumes its frustrating quest to knock NDSU from its lofty pedestal, the MVFC is on the front line of that battle.

Northern Iowa and South Dakota State are playoff-caliber teams once again, as is Illinois State. The Redbirds, who lost to the Bison in the 2014 national title game, have not played NDSU the past two regular seasons because of the conference's rotating schedule. The teams, who have shared the last two regular-season league crowns, meet in a non-playoff game for the first time since 2013 on Oct. 1 in Fargo.

Another contest ripe with potential for drama is the Oct. 29 matchup that sends Western Illinois to South Dakota. Despite a playoff appearance in 2015, coach Bob Nielson left the Leathernecks to take over the head-coaching duties at USD.

Charlie Fisher, the former offensive coordinator at Richmond, is the new coach at Western Illinois. The other new head man in the Valley is Nick Hill at Southern Illinois. A former Saluki quarterback, Hill was promoted from offensive coordinator.

The **North Dakota State** (13-2, 7-1 MVFC) offense will be potent once again with 329-pound guard Zack Johnson clearing a path for QB Easton Stick and an enviable stable of running backs that includes 1,158-yard rusher King Frazier, Chase Morlock and Bruce Anderson.

The Bison secondary demands restocking, but linebacker Nick DeLuca has NFL size (6-3, 245 pounds) and linemen Nate Tanguay and Greg Menard are formidable.

Northern Iowa (9-5, 5-3) quarterback Aaron Bailey was nearly unstoppable the second half of last season and joined 6-3, 224-pound tailback Tyvis Smith in the 1,000-yard rushing club. Four starters on the offensive line return to enhance the chances of a repeat performance.

Defensively, end Karter Schult's 14 sacks paced the Valley in 2015 and he'll team with tackle Preston Woods for a dependable front. But the Panthers are in the market for four new starters in the secondary, a unit that could make or break another playoff push.

Illinois State (10-3, 7-1) will fill one of just two vacancies on its starting offense with highly regarded sophomore quarterback Jake Kolbe. However, the successor to All-America tailback Marshaun Coprich is considerably less pronounced as speedy but undersized (5-6) Jamal Towns and sophomore George Moreira stand as the top options. An all-senior offensive line and All-MVFC receiver Anthony Warrum provide a sturdy foundation.

After tackle Dalton Keene and linebacker Alejandro Rivera, the Redbirds' defensive front seven is in flux. It is a necessity that a slew of youthful secondary players mature and become more physical as ISU seeks a third straight FCS playoff appearance.

South Dakota State (8-4, 5-3) coach John Stiegelmeier has two proven quarterbacks in senior Zach Lujan and sophomore Taryn Christion and used both extensively last season. At 6-4 and 210 pounds, junior Jake Wieneke is among the best receivers in the FCS.

The Jackrabbits' defense needs a new middle linebacker and two cornerbacks to emerge, but tackle Cole Langer is a stalwart in the middle as SDSU pursues a fifth consecutive NCAA berth.

At **Western Illinois** (7-6, 5-3), new coach Charlie Fisher inherits an offense that seeks the successor to workhorse running back Nikko Watson but returns skill and senior experience in 6-5 quarterback Trenton Norvell and wide receiver Lance Lenoir.

Linebacker Brett Taylor is among eight returning defensive starters and 17 overall.

Youngstown State (5-6, 3-5) end Derek Rivers is an elite pass rusher and three starters are back in a secondary that permitted a mere 116.7 passing yards per game and a 41.1-percent completion rate a year ago.

The Penguins suffered another late-season swoon in 2015 and could leap into the Valley's upper half behind the rushing of Martin Ruiz and Jody Webb. Junior-college transfer Trent Hosick, a former University of Missouri player, was recruited to compete with incumbent Hunter Wells for the quarterback job. Former Notre Dame wideout Will Mahone, who left the Irish in 2014 under a cloud of three felony charges, could make an impact as a walk-on at receiver, a unit that's yearning for playmakers.

Indiana State (5-6, 3-5) boasts the conference's returning passing-yardage leader in Matt Adam, who would benefit from better protection. Robert Tonyan Jr. is a 6-5 highlight-reel wide receiver. Senior linebacker Jameer Thurman is the marquee player on a defense that must shore up its pass coverage.

Southern Illinois (3-8, 2-6) welcomes back playmakers in tailback Daquan Isom and receivers Billy Reed and Jimmy Jones, but new coach Nick Hill must determine who will get them the ball with last year's leader in FCS total offense, quarterback Mark Iannotti, lost to graduation.

Linebacker Chase Allen is the preeminent player on a Saluki defense that is switching from a 3-4 front to a 4-3. University of Minnesota transfer Craig James should assist at cornerback and in the return game after playing in 18 games for the Golden Gophers as an underclassman.

Quarterback Ryan Saeger is among nine returning offensive starters for **South Dakota** (5-6, 3-5). Running back Trevor Bouma and receiver Riley Donovan are other key senior performers.

Defensively, the Coyotes were hurt by the transfer of all-league end Andrew Van Ginkel and have issues to resolve on the line and at cornerback.

Second-year **Missouri State** (1-10, 0-8) coach Dave Steckel has to hope his Bears hit bottom in 2015. Indeed, there was a resounding thud a year ago, as Missouri State was outscored by an alarming 48.6-9.1 margin while losing all eight conference games.

The painfully young Bears were clearly and repeatedly overmatched. Hope lies in a defense spearheaded by all-conference senior linebacker Dylan Cole. Junior tailback Calan Crowder is the offensive weapon.

THE VALLEY

PREDICTIONS

1. **North Dakota State**
2. **Northern Iowa**
3. **Illinois State**
4. **South Dakota State**
5. **Western Illinois**
6. **Youngstown State**
7. **Indiana State**
8. **Southern Illinois**
9. **South Dakota**
10. **Missouri State**

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Derek Rivers
DE, Youngstown State

Long and athletic, Rivers will terrorize league quarterbacks for one more season. The 6-5, 255-pound senior is already the career sack leader in Penguins history with 26. A two-time first-team All-MVFC selection, Rivers burst onto the scene as a sophomore with 14 sacks and 17 tackles for loss. The Kinston, N.C., product added nine sacks and 15.5 tackles for loss as a junior in coach Bo Pelini's first season in Youngstown.

Red (news) Flash: Home field to be decisive for SFU this time around

BY STEVE AMEDIO
Troy (N.Y.) Record

A year ago the Northeast Conference race was a two-team affair with a fitting final regular-season showdown between the league's last remaining one-loss squads, Duquesne and St. Francis.

And, just as fittingly, the championship-deciding contest was a good one with St. Francis grabbing an early 14-0 lead before the Dukes rallied behind their own potent offense for a 30-20 victory and the league's berth in the FCS playoffs.

This season could be more of the same as perennial NEC contender Duquesne and the upstart Red Flash look to battle once again for conference superiority.

Both teams return more than a dozen starters from a year ago. The only difference is that there won't be the season-long suspense to discover which team emerges—the two meet Oct. 22 at St. Francis, the third game of the NEC's six-game slate.

The home-field advantage might just be enough for SFU—the Red Flash won all five games on its DeGol Field in 2015—to win its first-ever NEC title.

St. Francis (7-4, 4-2 NEC) is coming off its first winning record since 1992, but still has to feel like it has unfinished business after failing to hold a two-touchdown lead in last season's showdown game with Duquesne.

The return of six starters on offense, eight on defense and the starting kicker, punter, kick returner and punt returner should create plenty of optimism. And, if success starts in the trenches, the Red Flash are in great shape with the return of all five offensive linemen, including 6-4, 300-pound senior Jimmy Marks, a first-team All-NEC pick last season.

The skill positions are in good hands with third-year starting QB Zack Drayer (152-for-250 passing for 1,977 yards and 15 TDs in 2015) and running back Marcus Bagley, the 2014 NEC Rookie of the Year who gained 626 rushing yards last season as a sophomore.

Kicker Lance Geesey, who was good on 16 of 17 field-goal attempts in 2015, was named to several FCS All-America teams and is back for his senior season.

Defensively, senior Lorenzo Jerome returns after enjoying a first-team All-NEC season in the secondary for the Red Flash last year.

Duquesne (8-4, 5-1) earned its first FCS playoff appearance in 2015 and put up a great fight before losing its first-round game, 52-49, to William & Mary.

The Dukes are poised for a run this year with eight returning starters on offense and six on defense. Senior quarterback Dillon Buechel (228-of-401 passing for 2,871 yards and 24 TD passes) was a second-team All-NEC choice last season, but his top two receivers have graduated. Offensive lineman Ben Huss (6-2, 307 pounds) was an all-conference first-teamer a year ago, and tailback Rafiq Douglas (186 carries, 977 yards) returns.

Defensively, senior linebacker Christian Kuntz was not only the NEC's Defensive Player of the Year but made numerous FCS All-America teams. Nathan Stone, another linebacker, was a second-team All-NEC pick and the Dukes have six transfers who should help.

Sacred Heart (6-5, 3-3) has cornerstone pieces on both sides of the ball with quarterback RJ Noel and linebacker James Rentz returning. Noel (182-of-325 passing for 2,431 yards and 19 TD passes) was the top signal-caller in the league last season. He gets offensive support from four strong returning offensive linemen and standout junior running back Ose Imeokparia (678 rushing yards in 2015). However, the top three pass catchers from a year ago, including all-time SHU receiving leader Tyler Dube, have graduated.

Defensively, Rentz (6-2, 245 pounds) was a first-team All-NEC linebacker last season and is among the league's best returning defenders. Lineman Ryan Cottrell (6-4, 260) was a second-team All-NEC pick and six defensive starters from 2015 are back.

Bryant (5-6, 3-3) beat the league's top two teams (Duquesne and St. Francis) during the first month of last season but won just one of its final four.

Now, the Bulldogs need to replace eight graduated defensive starters, although among the returnees are senior second-team All-NEC honorees Patrick Kenney at linebacker and Charles Wingate in the secondary. Offensively, senior QB Dalton Easton (205-for-374 passing for 2,601 yards) set a program single-season record for passing yards in 2015. One of his key receivers, Taylor Barthelette (32 catches) is back, but the team will have to find a replacement for running back Ricardo McCray, the NEC's Offensive Player of the Year in 2015.

Robert Morris (4-7, 2-4) should turn things around, but that will only happen if its offense can match its defensive excellence. To do so, the program brought in offensive coordinator Mike Miller, who had been in the NFL for 13 seasons. He has some good pieces to work with, particularly at the skill positions with sophomore Kyle Buss (50 catches, 742 yards), the NEC's Rookie of the Year last season, along with QB Mathew Barr, a two-time NEC Rookie of the Week last season, and junior running backs Cole Blake and Rameses Owens.

On defense, all four members of the secondary return, including two-time All-NEC honoree Marcelis Branch and second-team All-NEC pick Andy Smigiera.

After a tough 2015, there's greater optimism at **Wagner** (1-10, 1-5) this season, with key returnees and impact transfers joining the program. Among the transfers is quarterback AJ Long, who started five games at Syracuse in 2014. He'll contend with returnees Chris Andrews, a senior who played four games a year ago before a season-ending injury, and 6-5, 220-pound junior Alex Thomson, who took over after Andrews was hurt. Their top targets will be wideouts Andre Yevchinecz and Zaire Andre, a Washington State transfer.

The strong points of the defense are linebackers Najee Harris and Randall May and a secondary that returns three starters.

Central Connecticut State (4-7, 3-3) should see improvement on the offensive side of the ball with the natural progression of second-year signal-callers Jacob Dolegala (87-of-171 passing for 1,021 yards) and Tavion Pauldo (64-of-116 for 725), both of whom showed great development during their freshman campaigns. Junior running back Cameron Nash (118 carries, 676 yards) is also back.

Defensively, 6-3, 225-pound senior end/outside linebacker Asia Bolling and senior cornerback Jevon Elmore were first-team all-league picks in 2015, while 6-3, 280-pound lineman Chris Tinkham was the NEC's Defensive Rookie of the Year.

PREDICTIONS

1. **St. Francis (Pa.)**
2. **Duquesne**
3. **Sacred Heart**
4. **Bryant**
5. **Robert Morris**
6. **Wagner**
7. **Central Connecticut State**

KUNTZ: DUQUESNE ATHLETICS

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Christian Kuntz
LB, Duquesne

The NEC's reigning Defensive Player of the Year, who led the nation in tackles for loss in 2013 but missed the 2014 season with an injury, bounced back to make 26 tackles behind the line (sixth best in NEC history) in 2015. He was the league's Defensive Player of the Year last season. A 6-1, 220-pound senior from Pittsburgh, Kuntz also had 11 sacks on the way to being named a second-team All-American by the *Associated Press*.

OHIO VALLEY

OVCSPORTS.COM

J-State the fave if Jenkins plays

BY MICHAEL GRANT
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

For the first time since 1982, the Ohio Valley Conference played for a national championship last year. Jacksonville State enjoyed its best season as an FCS member but lost to North Dakota State in the title game. This year's team might not be as good as last year's but the Gamecocks will be favored to win the OVC title once again assuming quarterback Eli Jenkins' legal issues are behind him.

On paper, Eastern Illinois might be the only legitimate challenger. The Panthers have great talent on offense but the defense will be mostly revamped. Eastern Kentucky has been a factor in the past but will have a new coach in Mark Elder and lost All-America defensive end Noah Spence to early NFL Draft entry.

Jacksonville State (13-2, 8-0 OVC) tied a conference record for victories in 2015 and will try to stay in the championship hunt this year. Over the past five seasons, the Gamecocks have the fourth-most victories in the nation.

Quarterback Eli Jenkins, the reigning OVC Offensive Player of the Year, returns for his senior campaign. But he was arrested in the offseason after an alleged domestic violence incident. He is also recovering from shoulder surgery. Jenkins' 3,949 yards of total offense in 2015 were the second most in OVC history. He also returns All-OVC wide receiver Josh Barge, who hauled in a school-record 92 catches for 1,145 yards and 11 TDs.

Offensive linemen Casey Dunn and Justin Lea paved the way for the nation's third-best rushing attack (300.7 yards per game). Kentucky transfer Josh Clemons could take over as the top tailback, assuming the NCAA grants him a sixth year of eligibility due to injuries. Star defensive end LaMichael Fanning is also seeking a sixth year after missing most of last season with a knee injury. He'll pair with Darius Jackson (19.0 tackles for loss, 7.0 sacks) to form a pair of standout bookends on the D-line.

Eastern Illinois (7-5, 7-1) shook off an 0-3 start last season and its only conference blemish was a 24-3 home loss to eventual league champ Jacksonville State.

The defense allowed the second-fewest points per game in conference play (19.8). But it will have to do without graduated All-American and OVC co-Defensive Player of the Year Dino Fanti at tackle. Senior linebacker Seth McDonald will lead a defense that has four returning starters. McDonald was fourth in the OVC in tackles per game (9.1).

On offense, tailback and Illinois transfer Devin Church made an impact in his first season. He was a second-team All-OVC selection, rushing for 743 yards and nine touchdowns. Arkansas transfer Korliss Marshall sat out last year but figures to play a key role in the rushing game with Church. The questions lie at quarterback. The Panthers added two transfers to help there: Bud Martin (ex-FIU) and Mitch Kimble (Syracuse).

The new man in charge at **Eastern Kentucky** (6-5, 5-3) is former Tennessee assistant Mark Elder. Elder comes to EKU at a time when the program is actively seeking to upgrade to the FBS. The new coach has said he's willing to do whatever it takes to get there. The biggest reasons for optimism? The Colonels return their top quarterback (Bennie Coney), leading rusher (Ethan Thomas) and best wide receiver (6-6, 220-pound Devin Borders).

Tennessee-Martin (7-4, 6-2) just missed out on a playoff berth with conference losses coming only to Jacksonville State and Eastern Illinois by a combined 10 points. The Skyhawks will be rebuilding after the departure of their top quarterback, running back and wide receiver. Jason Simpson, the league's winningest active coach, has a proven track record (51-28 in conference play).

At quarterback, Troy Cook, a Florida State transfer, will compete with Marshall graduate transfer Gunnar Holcombe for the starting job. The defense will add Arkansas transfer Anthony Brown at tackle. He'll combine with second-team All-OVC pick Damani Taylor (9.0 tackles for loss, 5.5 sacks) to form a formidable defensive front.

There's reason for optimism in coach Mitch Stewart's second season at **Murray State** (3-8, 2-6). The Racers will bring back one of the nation's most prolific passers in senior KD Humphries, who led the FCS in passing yards (3,778) and set the school record for passing yards last year.

The challenge for Humphries is that he has lost his three best receivers. Jesse Blackburn (48 catches for 612 yards, 5 TDs) is the top returning pass catcher for the nation's second-best passing offense (347.3 yards per game). Tailback Roman Clay is coming off a breakout season with 916 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns.

Tennessee State's (4-6, 1-6) lone OVC victory last season came against Austin Peay. The Tigers were also unlucky with three conference losses by six points or fewer, including an overtime loss to Eastern Illinois.

Junior wideout Patrick Smith (54 catches, 996 yards, 10 TDs) was one of the league's most dangerous players in 2015. The second-team All-OVC selection had six plays of 50 yards or more and collected 248 receiving yards against Murray State.

The Tigers need a better running game. North Texas transfer Erick Evans showed promise by rushing for 375 yards and five scores in last season's final four games. All-OVC defensive end Ebenezer Ogundeko (5.0 sacks, 10.0 tackles for loss) is a backfield terror.

Southeast Missouri (4-7, 3-4) has one of the league's best players in senior tailback Tremane McCullough. He's the OVC's leading returning rusher after finishing third in the conference with 1,028 yards last season. He also had 33 catches.

This is the third season for the Redhawks under coach Tom Matukewicz. Any improvement will likely depend on quarterback play. In nine games as a freshman, Dante Vandeven passed for 1,568 yards with 11 TDs and seven interceptions. Senior linebacker Roper Garrett is the OVC's leading returning tackler.

Former Temple offensive coordinator Marcus Satterfield takes over for the retired Watson Brown at **Tennessee Tech** (4-7, 3-5). Tech won the OVC in 2011 and hasn't finished with a winning record since. Job No. 1 for Satterfield will be improving an offense that averaged 324.2 yards per game (94th in the nation) and 23.1 points (77th). Tech's two top wide receivers are back: Brock McCoin (61 catches, 747 yards, 4 TDs) and Krys Cates (24, 525, 6).

Austin Peay (0-11, 0-8) finished last season as the one winless team in the FCS. The Governors will enter 2016 with a 16-game losing streak, not having won since Oct. 18, 2014, when they beat Murray State 20-13.

New coach Will Healy, 30, a former Chattanooga assistant, replaces Kirby Cannon, who went 1-34 in three seasons at APSU. Austin Peay's best weapon is tailback Kendall Morris, who was seventh in OVC rushing (63.2 ypg) last year as a freshman.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Jacksonville State**
2. **Eastern Illinois**
3. **Eastern Kentucky**
4. **Tennessee-Martin**
5. **Murray State**
6. **Tennessee State**
7. **Southeast Missouri**
8. **Tennessee Tech**
9. **Austin Peay**

FANNING. DAVE MARTIN / AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

LaMichael Fanning
DE, Jacksonville State

Assuming he's given a sixth year of eligibility via a medical hardship waiver, and returns healthy, Fanning could be the league's most disruptive force. The 6-7, 275-pound redshirt senior was invited to the NFL Scouting Combine but decided to go back to school. Fanning played in three games last season before suffering a season-ending ACL tear. In 2014, he was a first-team All-OVC selection.

PATRIOT LEAGUE

PATRIOTLEAGUE.ORG

With Edmonds back, Rams should rush past Colgate for league title

PREDICTIONS

1. Fordham
2. Colgate
3. Holy Cross
4. Lehigh
5. Bucknell
6. Georgetown
7. Lafayette

BY PATRICK STEVENS
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

The top of the Patriot League was impressive last fall, and the conference landed two teams in the FCS playoffs for only the second time in 10 seasons. Fordham, a frequent favorite in recent years, beat Army in its opener and ultimately finished second to an improved Colgate bunch.

Those two again appear to be the teams to beat, but Holy Cross made considerable strides in 2015 and has significant experience back in several areas. It improved by two wins last year and could be in for another jump.

Maybe the biggest question in the league is the direction **Fordham** (9-3, 5-1 Patriot) goes in after coach Joe Moorhead departed to become the offensive coordinator at Penn State. The Rams were 38-13 with three playoff berths over the last four seasons under Moorhead, who routinely fielded prolific offenses in the Bronx.

There is considerable continuity, though, as Fordham promoted offensive coordinator Andrew Breiner to fill Moorhead's position. And unlike last year, when the Rams had several pieces to replace after graduation took away several major contributors, Fordham brings back 18 starters this fall.

Chief among them is junior tailback Chase Edmonds, who was the Patriot League's Offensive Player of the Year while accounting for 25 touchdowns. Fordham brings back four of its five starters on the offensive line, and quarterback Kevin Anderson enters his second year as a starter.

Colgate (9-5, 6-0) was all about establishing a ground game and stopping the run en route to a perfect run through the Patriot last year. The Raiders went on to win a pair of playoff games before falling in the quarterfinals to Sam Houston State, and there's a lot to like about what returns in Hamilton, N.Y.

Senior quarterback Jake Melville finished third in the conference in rushing with 1,073 yards and 11 TDs, and also threw for 11 scores against only two interceptions. Junior tailback James Holland is also back after rumbling for 16 scores a season ago. Defensively, linebacker Kyle Diener is the leader of a stout unit that gave up only 150.1 rushing yards per game. He made a league-best 129 tackles in 2015. Defensive end Pat Afriyie returns after pacing the league in sacks (9.5) and tackles for loss (17.5).

The best pitch-and-catch combination in the Patriot League returns intact this fall for **Holy Cross** (6-5, 3-3). The Crusaders will lean heavily on senior quarterback Peter Pujals, who threw for 3,195 yards and 28 touchdowns last year, and senior wideout Brendan Flaherty, who topped the conference in catches (106), receiving yards (1,082) and receiving TDs (12).

Holy Cross also held opponents to 3.9 yards per carry, the second-best figure in the Patriot. Maintaining the progress seen on that side of the ball will be critical for the Crusaders to take another jump.

There's no doubt about the offense at **Lehigh** (6-5, 4-2), which returns conference Rookie of the Year Dominick Bragalone. The sophomore running back is coming off a 1,008-yard debut season and is an excellent complement to quarterback Nick Shafnisky, who finished sixth in the Patriot in passing yards and fifth in rushing yards last year.

The question in Bethlehem, Pa., is whether the defense can hold up after giving up at least 49 points on four occasions in 2015. Six starters return, including senior linebacker Colton Caslow (23 career starts), so the Mountain Hawks have some experience to fall back on.

Bucknell faced a situation the complete opposite of Lehigh's during its 4-7 (1-5 Patriot) run last fall: plenty of defense and not nearly enough offense. The Bison led the league across the board—fewest points, total yards, rushing yards and passing yards allowed. Noseguard Ben Schumacher ranked second in the Patriot in tackles for loss (13.5) and safety Bryan Marine led the league in interceptions (4).

Much of the defense returns, so the Bison should be competitive. Yet after scoring more than 20 points only twice last year, any movement up the standings will be predicated on offensive improvement.

There are some holes on offense for **Georgetown** (4-7, 2-4), which suffered three one-possession losses in conference games last season. Both quarterback Kyle Nolan and tailback Jo'el Kimpela graduated, but six starters do return. Senior Tim Barnes is projected to take over under center for Nolan and has an established receiver in senior Justin Hill to work with.

Defensively, linebacker should be a strength for the Hoyas with starters Daniel Yankovich (88 tackles) and Leo Loughrey (83) returning.

It was a rough 2015 season at **Lafayette** (1-10, 0-6), which was held to less than 10 points in seven of its first eight games. The offense showed some life down the stretch, and the Leopards received a 146-yard rushing day from tailback DeSean Brown in the season finale against Lehigh. Perhaps that solid finish translates into a bounce-back season this fall, especially after the running game struggled for much of the year.

The Leopards also need progress on defense, though, and junior linebacker Brandon Bryant figures to be a mainstay again after making 114 stops a season ago. Lafayette ranked last in the league in both total defense and rushing defense and must become less leaky to make a push toward .500.

EDMONDS: MIKE GROLL / AP

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Chase Edmonds
RB, Fordham

In two seasons with the Rams, Edmonds has rushed for 3,486 yards and 43 touchdowns. He rumbled for 137.3 yards per game as a sophomore, 45.7 yards more per contest than anyone else in the Patriot League. He'll be a pivotal piece of Fordham's offense for the third consecutive season.

PIONEER LEAGUE

PIONEER-FOOTBALL.ORG

It's the Toreros' turn in the PFL

BY TYLER MILLER
Sporting News Yearbooks staff

The Pioneer Football League champion has waited patiently for its postseason prize since it was first granted by the NCAA in 2013, but it wasn't until last year that it reaped its reward. Dayton became the first PFL champion to advance to the FCS Playoffs after the previous two league winners, San Diego and Jacksonville, missed out due to self-imposed sanctions to preempt any potential NCAA penalties.

The Flyers, who shared the title with San Diego last year but claimed the playoff bid by virtue of their 13-12 win over the Toreros, return some key players to defend the title, but USD appears primed to overtake them with most everyone back from a team that led the league in scoring offense (31.0 ppg) and was second in scoring defense.

San Diego (9-2, 7-1 Pioneer) finished last season in the top three of just about every offensive and defensive category in the PFL. Leading the charge was quarterback Anthony Lawrence, who had a passing-efficiency mark of 153.5 (almost 25 points ahead of the runner-up) to go with 23 touchdowns as a freshman. Lawrence will hand the ball off to running back Jereke Armstrong, who finished fifth in PFL rushing (662 yards) and scored seven touchdowns, and throw to 6-3, 190-pound Brian Riley, a second-team All-PFL wideout who hauled in 44 catches and eight TDs while averaging 17.8 yards per reception.

Junior end Jonathan Petersen is back to lead the defense after coming up with eight sacks and 16 tackles for loss on a USD unit that allowed 309.7 yards a game.

Dayton (10-2, 7-1) had more players receive first-team selections for all-conference (8) than any school in the Pioneer last season—but six of them were seniors. Running back Tucker Yinger was named second team All-PFL after leading the team in rushing yards (731) and rushing average (6.1 ypc) as a freshman. Sophomore quarterback Alex Jeske also returns after throwing for 2,052 yards in 2015.

Looking to fill leadership roles on defense will be junior Jack Crain (105 tackles) and first-team all-league cornerback Christian Searles, who ranked second on the Flyers in solo tackles (42) and interceptions (5) as a sophomore.

Jacksonville (9-2, 6-2) is finally eligible for postseason contention after its self-imposed ban. First-team All-PFL running back Ulysses Bryant returns for his senior season after rushing for 763 yards and averaging 104.4 all-purpose yards per game. The Dolphins need to find replacements, however, for graduated quarterback Kade Bell and receiver Andy Jones, a duo that accounted for 3,257 passing yards and 29 touchdowns last season.

Back on defense are All-PFL linebacker Grady Redding (100 tackles) and defensive back Terrance Bryant (3 INTs).

Morehead State (7-4, 6-2) is coming off its best season since 2007, falling one five-point loss to Dayton away from advancing to the postseason. The Eagles will be led by senior quarterback Austin Gahafer, the 2015 PFL Offensive Player of the Year who threw for 3,244 yards and 24 touchdowns to go along with three rushing and two receiving scores. His top returning target is senior Jake Raymond (72 catches, 6 TDs).

Campbell (5-6, 3-5) has arguably the PFL's best running back in De'Shawn Jones, who led the league in rushing last year (1,079 yards) while adding eight touchdowns and resetting his own single-game school record with 201 yards and three scores against Davidson. The Fighting Camels, coached by longtime former NFL safety Mike Minter, will have some defensive gaps to fill as All-PFL honorees Ugonna Awuruonye, Greg Milhouse Jr. and Jake Barr have used up their eligibility. But defensive back Chris Beaty returns after making 20 tackles and three interceptions in 2015, and he'll get help from linebacker Jack Ryan (66 tackles).

A **Butler** (6-5, 4-4) offense that averaged 28.2 points per game, third in the conference, will need to find a replacement for graduated quarterback Matt Shiltz, who passed for 2,713 yards and 19 touchdowns while rushing for 639 yards and 10 scores in 2015. Several All-PFL defenders are slated to return, however, including leading tacklers Sean Horan (72 stops) and Ethan Brunhofer (63) at linebacker.

Drake (5-6, 4-4) continued to play solid defense last season, allowing 330.3 yards per game, fourth best in the league. It's nearly impossible to replace the one-man wrecking crew of graduated linebacker John Hugunin, who made 110 tackles as a senior. The Bulldogs lose three other starting All-PFL recipients, but first-team senior defensive lineman Mack Marrin returns after leading the league in sacks (8.5). Drake will need to replace graduated quarterback Andy Rice but can take solace in the return of senior running back Conley Wilkins, the only PFL rusher to average 90 yards or more per game in league play last year.

Marist (5-6, 4-4) is dealing with three key defensive departures—Demetrius Williams, Miguel Sandoval and Zach Adler—and coach Jim Parady is looking to linebacker Jimmy Braun and cornerback Cameron Gibson to step into leadership roles as seniors. Offensively, junior quarterback Mike White returns to the helm for the Red Foxes, while sophomore standout Juston Christian is back after receiving second-team All-PFL honors while scoring six touchdowns on 826 yards receiving as a freshman.

Valparaiso (1-9, 1-7) slipped to the back of the pack in 2015 after several key players experienced significant injuries, including quarterbacks Dalton Stokes and Ryan Clarke, who will vie for the starting job this year. Stokes started three games in 2015 while Clarke was under center for six. Their top targets will be wideouts Jean Rene and Frank Catrine, each of whom had more than 430 receiving yards last season.

Kellan Hughes and Joey Diaz-Martinez return in the secondary after combining for seven interceptions and 73 tackles in their first year of college football. J.J. Nunes (76 tackles), a senior defensive back, and junior linebacker Kye Hall (55) round out the top returnees on defense.

Defense-oriented **Stetson** (3-8, 1-7) returns PFL Defensive Player of the Year and All-America safety Donald Payne Jr. after the 6-1, 217-pound senior finished with 126 tackles, 16 tackles for loss and two interceptions in 2015. Also returning is junior defensive back Eric Martin (5 INTs) and senior end Davion Belk (7.5 sacks).

Davidson (2-9, 1-7) was able to notch a league win in the final week last season against Stetson. A team that has struggled both offensively and defensively may have some more issues as their lone offensive star, wideout William Morris, graduated after a stellar career. Second-team All-PFL pick Ben Rowell is back to spearhead the secondary and special teams after producing 623 return yards on kicks and punts in 2015.

PREDICTIONS

1. **San Diego**
2. **Dayton**
3. **Jacksonville**
4. **Morehead State**
5. **Campbell**
6. **Butler**
7. **Drake**
8. **Marist**
9. **Valparaiso**
10. **Stetson**
11. **Davidson**

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Donald Payne Jr.
S, Stetson

Payne, who was overlooked by all FBS schools in 2013 coming out of a tiny 1A Christian school in Fayetteville, Ga., has been called the "Troy Polamalu of FCS" by one national writer. In his three seasons starting for the Hatters, Payne has made more than 400 tackles, including an eye-popping 185 as a sophomore in 2014 and 30 in one game against Campbell. The 6-1, 217-pound strong safety is rated the No. 11 player at his position for the 2017 draft, according to nfldraftscout.com.

Mocs bid to make it four straight

BY WILL LONG
Assistant Editor

Chattanooga has won or shared the last three Southern Conference titles, and the Mocs appear poised to make it four in a row in 2016. Three-time SoCon Offensive Player of the Year Jacob Huesman has graduated, so Chattanooga may regress a bit, leaving the door slightly ajar for Wofford, The Citadel and Samford to stake a claim as the SoCon's best.

East Tennessee State, which played football last season for the first time since 2003, joins the league as a full-fledged member for 2016. The only new coach in the conference this season will be Brent Thompson at The Citadel. Serving as the Bulldogs' offensive coordinator the last two seasons, Thompson will keep the triple-option offense of predecessor Mike Houston, who left for the head job at James Madison.

Chattanooga (9-4, 6-1 SoCon) loses its top offensive weapon in quarterback Jacob Huesman, but nine starters return for an offense that averaged 415.4 yards and 29.5 points per game. Senior offensive lineman Corey Levin earned consensus first-team All-America honors in 2015 and is a two-time winner of the Jacobs Blocking Trophy given to the top offensive lineman in the SoCon. Capable of playing either guard or tackle, Levin will help pave the way for senior running back Derrick Craine, who rushed for a school-record 1,251 yards last season while earning first team All-SoCon honors. The receiving corps returns intact, led by senior C.J. Board (42 catches, 587 yards, 3 TDs), so quarterback Alejandro Bennifield will be surrounded by experienced and talented pieces as he replaces Huesman.

Defensively, the Mocs must replace linebacker A.J. Hampton, who led the team with 87 tackles in 2015. But Chattanooga has experience on all three levels, led by 6-4, 260-pound lineman Keionta Davis. As a junior, Davis led the SoCon and tied for second in the nation with 13.5 sacks. Linebacker Nakevion Leslie is the top returning tackler after making 86 stops, and junior Lucas Webb will anchor the secondary after intercepting three passes and returning two for scores in 2015.

Mike Ayers enters his 28th season as head coach at **Wofford** (5-6, 3-4) with an experienced team poised to make a run at the SoCon title. Fullback Lorenzo Long (178 carries, 969 yards, 8 TDs) and quarterback Evan Jacks (116, 675, 7) return for their senior seasons to pace an option offense that averaged 300.2 rushing yards per game in 2015.

Any improvement the Terriers make must begin with better defense. Wofford allowed 27.7 points per game in 2015 and leading tackler Drake Michaelson and cornerback Brion Anderson (3 INTs) have graduated. Nine starters do return on this side of the ball, led by 6-1, 310-pound lineman Miles Brown, a SoCon All-Freshman pick who recorded 36 tackles and 3.5 sacks.

Brent Thompson was promoted from offensive coordinator to head coach after **The Citadel** (9-4, 6-1) wrapped up its best season since 1992. Thompson will keep the triple-option attack that rolled up 346.9 rushing yards per game last year, and quarterback Dominique Allen (953 yards rushing, 13 touchdowns), A-back Cam Jackson (751, 6) and B-back Tyler Renew (839, 5) comprise a formidable trio for opponents to deal with. Renew rushed for a career-high 174 yards, including a game-winning 56-yard scamper, in the Bulldogs' shocking 23-22 upset of South Carolina last year.

Seven starters return on defense, led by All-America defensive back Dee Delaney, a junior who recorded 46 tackles, five interceptions, eight pass breakups, two forced fumbles, one fumble recovery and a blocked kick.

Eight starters return for the SoCon's highest-scoring offense at **Samford** (6-5, 3-4). Sophomore quarterback Devlin Hodges completed 200 of 288 passes (69.4 percent) for 2,230 yards and 12 touchdowns a year ago, and he will throw to talented wideouts Karel Hamilton (75 receptions, 880 yards, 4 TDs) and Kelvin McKnight (57, 616, 2).

The Bulldogs must improve against the rush after allowing opponents to amass 221.8 yards per game on the ground last season. Eight starters are back on defense, led by free safety Jamerson Blount, who had 75 tackles, three interceptions and eight pass breakups.

Mercer (5-6, 2-5) returns 20 starters from a team that struggled to finish close games in 2015, when it lost five contests by a combined 20 points. This year, the Bears should be able to establish a solid ground game with junior running backs Tee Mitchell (946 yards, 6 TDs) and Alex Lakes (692, 7), who was the SoCon's leading rusher in 2014 but missed time due to a collapsed lung and cracked ribs last season. The Bears led the league in scoring defense (21.6 points per game) and lose only cornerback Alex Avant.

The biggest question facing **Western Carolina** (7-4, 5-2) is who will replace quarterback Troy Mitchell, the Catamounts' career leader in all-purpose and passing yards. The leading candidate is junior Wes Holcombe, who has completed 17 of 31 passes for 142 yards over the last two seasons. Holcombe will benefit from the return of two dangerous 6-4 senior targets in wide receiver Spearman Robinson (108 career receptions, 1,301 yards) and tight end Tyler Sexton (43, 569), both of whom can stretch the field.

Furman (4-7, 2-5) has seven starters back on offense, but the Paladins were last in the SoCon in rushing (118.2 yards per game) and scoring (17.5 points per game) last year. Coach Bruce Fowler's team returns only two starters along the offensive line, and several players with limited or no experience will have to step in up front if the Paladins are to improve. Furman also must shore up the conference's worst rush defense after allowing 222.3 yards per game on the ground in 2015.

While **VMI** (2-9, 1-6) won the same amount of games as it did in 2014, the program improved markedly last season in coach Scott Wachenheim's first year at the helm. The Keydets picked up their first road win in five seasons, improved their scoring margin in conference play by nine points per game and allowed 55.2 fewer yards per outing than 2014. Quarterback Al Cobb completed 61.2 percent of his passes for 2,736 yards and 14 touchdowns in 2015, but the 6-3, 190-pound junior must cut down on the 18 interceptions he threw.

East Tennessee State (2-9) struggled as an independent in its first season of action since 2003. The Bucs lost to Division 2 Maryville College and Division 3 Emory & Henry. As a freshman last year, linebacker Dylan Weigel led the FCS in solo tackles with 79 while amassing 127 total tackles. However, the Bucs will need to tighten up significantly on defense after allowing five opponents to score 47 points or more last season.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Chattanooga**
2. **Wofford**
3. **The Citadel**
4. **Samford**
5. **Mercer**
6. **Western Carolina**
7. **Furman**
8. **VMI**
9. **East Tennessee State**

LEVIN: BRYAN LYNN / ICON SPORTSWIRE

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Corey Levin
OL, Chattanooga

Levin, a consensus first-team All-American in 2015, returns to anchor a ground attack that rushed for 241.9 yards per game and produced two 1,000-yard rushers last season. Levin has won the Jacobs Blocking Trophy—given to the top offensive lineman in the Southern Conference—in each of the past two seasons and has the size (6-5, 305 pounds) and intangibles to succeed at the next level.

SOUTHLAND

SOUTHLAND.ORG

Look for Bearkats to continue their string of Southland success

BY TIM BUCKLEY
Lafayette (La.) Daily Advertiser

McNeese State went undefeated in the 2015 regular season.

But it lost its opening playoff game to the Southland program practically synonymous with postseason play of late, Sam Houston State, which went to the 2011 and 2012 FCS title games, made back-to-back semifinal appearances in 2014 and 2015 and has five straight postseason appearances.

Only one FCS program has a better record than SHSU's 56-19 over those five years: 71-5 North Dakota State, winner of five straight national championships.

The reigning Southland Offensive Player of the Year, quarterback Jared Johnson, threw for 2,216 yards and rushed for 470 last season at **Sam Houston State** (11-4, 7-2 Southland). He's back for his senior season, but SHSU also has what amounts to a co-No. 1 QB in former UAB player Jeremiah Briscoe (1,883 passing yards, 14 TDs), which gives the Bearkats enviable depth and quality at the most important position.

What has the Bearkats on the highway to a potential national title in coach K.C. Keeler's third season: nine returning defensive starters and seven on offense, including leading rusher Corey Avery (1,483 yards, 15 TDs) and receiver Yedidiah Louis (71 catches, 994 yards).

One downer: All-Southland offensive tackle Donald Jackson III, a four-year starter, has graduated.

But SHSU returns junior P.J. Hall (52.0 tackles for loss and 23.0 sacks over the last two years) to a D-line that also features standouts like Jacobi Hunter, Sione Latu and Mouf Adebo.

Matt Viator parlayed success at **McNeese State** (10-1, 9-0) into an FBS job at Louisiana-Monroe in the offseason, allowing defensive coordinator Lance Guidry to be promoted to coach his alma mater.

The Cowboys lost Southland Defensive Player of the Year Wallace Scott and five starters on offense, including quarterback Daniel Sams. The probable replacement: Grant Ashcraft, a 6-6, 220-pound pro-style gunslinger from (appropriately?) Humble, Texas.

McNeese regains running back Dylan Long, who had a team-high 10 touchdowns in 2014 but was injured last season, and defensive end Brian Hine, who was also hurt in 2015.

Graduation hit **Central Arkansas** (7-4, 7-2) hard on both lines. Among those gone: defensive ends Jonathan Woodard and Derek Floyd, who combined for 20.0 tackles for loss last season.

But junior quarterback Hayden Hildebrand returns after throwing for 1,707 yards in 2015, and his top target, senior wide receiver Desmond Smith (67 catches, 817 yards), remains.

Three straight home games to open 2016 should help coach Steve Campbell's Bears.

Northwestern State (4-7, 4-5) returns quarterbacks J.D. Almond and Joel Blumenthal from a team that overcame an 0-5 start last year, but the Demons also added graduate transfer Brooks Haack, who started eight FBS games for Louisiana in 2015.

Several newcomers could contribute immediately on defense, including junior-college transfer Austin Balthazar and touted incoming freshman Hayden Bourgeois in the secondary.

Clint Conque hired ex-BYU head coach and former LSU and Oregon offensive coordinator Gary Crowton to ramp up the tempo at **Stephen F. Austin** (4-7, 4-5), which has a third-year starter at quarterback in 6-6, 237-pound senior Zach Conque (the head coach's son) but loses three O-line starters.

The Lumberjacks have averaged 30.9 points and 445.7 yards per game over the last two years, but last season they averaged 28.7 points, thus ending an FCS-high streak of seven straight seasons scoring 30 or more points per game.

Nicholls State (3-8, 3-6) ended 2015 with victories in two of its last three games, and coach Tim Rebowe's Colonels hope for some carryover.

Dual-threat senior quarterback Tuskani Figaro has the experience to lead an offense with potential—especially if a running back (perhaps sophomore T.J. Scott) steps up and if senior receiver C.J. Bates increases his 2015 output (28 catches for 395 yards).

With quarterback Carson Earp's 2015 season shortened by injury and University of Miami transfer Clayton Turner transitioning from wideout to QB, **Lamar** (5-6, 4-5) may again ride reigning Southland Player of the Year Kade Harrington, a senior running back who last season led the FCS in rushing yards (2,092) and scored 21 touchdowns.

But defense is an issue for the Cardinals after they yielded 30.4 points per game last year, especially with All-Southland senior defensive end Larance Hale (21.5 tackles for loss in 2015) getting dismissed from the team for a violation of team rules just prior to spring practice.

Southeastern Louisiana (4-7, 3-6) must rebuild its secondary, a daunting task with Harlan Miller (11 career interceptions) gone. But perhaps the bigger issue is on offense, where new coordinator Matt Barrett must trim the 28 turnovers the Lions committed in 2015.

All-America quarterback Bryan Bennett produced 2013/2014 FCS playoff appearances, but Southeastern struggled last season as his replacement, D'Shaie Landor, dealt with injuries.

No FCS or even FBS program in Texas permitted fewer yards per game last season than **Incarnate Word** (6-5, 5-4). But the Cardinals graduated super-productive linebacker Myke Tavarres (110 total tackles and 22.5 tackles for loss in 2015), but quarterback Trent Brittain remains after throwing for 2,254 yards.

Cornerback Jabari Butler, last season's Southland Freshman of the Year, had six interceptions for **Abilene Christian** (3-8, 3-6), which is coming off its first losing season since 2005.

Butler's back, as are linebacker Sam Denmark, who was in on a Southland-high 138 tackles last year, and QB Parker McKenzie (1,855 passing yards). But injuries and departures leave the Wildcats somewhat thin.

Houston Baptist (2-9, 0-8), whose only wins last year were over Bethany College and College of Faith, returns 10 starters on each side of the ball, including 6-6, 240-pound pocket passer Max Staver, who must fend off dual threat Tony Dawson at quarterback, and linebacker Garrett Dolan, who was in on 110 tackles last season.

PREDICTIONS

1. **Sam Houston State**
2. **McNeese State**
3. **Central Arkansas**
4. **Northwestern State**
5. **Stephen F. Austin**
6. **Nicholls State**
7. **Lamar**
8. **Southeastern Louisiana**
9. **Incarnate Word***
10. **Abilene Christian***
11. **Houston Baptist**

**Not eligible for FCS playoffs*

GOLDEN: JOHN KORDUNER / ICON SMI

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Isaiah Golden
DL, McNeese State

A 6-2, 335-pound junior from Carthage, Texas, Golden is a transfer from Texas A&M who already has NFL scouts keeping tabs on him. Golden had 31 total tackles last season for the Cowboys and 30 while playing in 11 games (six starts) for the Aggies in 2013.

SWAC full of opportunity, but who will answer the knock?

BY LUT WILLIAMS
Black College Sports Page

Former Alcorn State head coach Jay Hopson—the first Caucasian man to hold that position in SWAC history—parlayed back-to-back SWAC championships into the head-coaching job at FBS Southern Miss. His salary took a significant leap from a reported $150,000 at Alcorn to a reported half-million dollars at USM.

Hopson brought Alcorn back from the doldrums, dramatically turning the Braves around in four years. Broderick Fobbs at Grambling, Dawson Odums at Southern and Willie Simmons at Prairie View have done similar jobs bringing their programs back. After this season, at least one of them may get a similar opportunity as Hopson.

EAST DIVISON

Two-time defending champion **Alcorn State** (9-4, 7-2 SWAC) lost its coach, Jay Hopson, and a bevy of offensive and defensive playmakers. Fortunately, there's continuity with assistant head coach Fred McNair moving into Hopson's place and quarterback Lenorris Footman, who took over midway through last season and topped 1,000 yards passing and rushing. Kick returner/wide receiver Marquis Warford, the SWAC Newcomer of the Year, running back Arron Baker and rock-solid lineman Detonio Dade are other offensive mainstays.

Leadership on defense will fall to linebackers Darien Anderson and Michael Hurns, ends Stacey Garner and Michael Brooks Jr. and defensive back Eric Foster.

The restoration of spring practice will help **Alabama State** (6-5, 5-4) improve on coach Brian Jenkins' first year. Quarterbacks Ellis Richardson and Quinterris Toppings will also benefit from their second year in his system.

PREDICTIONS

EAST DIVISION

1. **Alcorn State**
2. **Alabama State**
3. **Jackson State**
4. **Alabama A&M**
5. **Mississippi Valley State**

WEST DIVISION

1. **Grambling State**
2. **Prairie View A&M**
3. **Southern**
4. **Texas Southern**
5. **Arkansas-Pine Bluff**

GRIFFIN: KEN MURRAY / ICON SPORTSWIRE

TOP NFL PROSPECT

Derrick Griffin
WR/TE, Texas Southern

At 6-7 and 230 pounds, Griffin is a superb athlete, good enough as a receiver to average 19.7 yards per catch and score 11 touchdowns on the gridiron last season and, as a center, sweep SWAC honors for Player of the Year, Defensive Player of the Year and Newcomer of the Year in basketball. Think Tony Gonzalez or Antonio Gates, with more speed.

Running back Khalid Thomas led the Hornets in rushing and receptions in 2015 but should get help from sophomores Alex Anderson and Rob Pritchett. Linebacker Kourtney Berry, the SWAC's Defensive Player of the Year and leading tackler (130) last year, returns for his senior season and leads a defense that returns seven of its top nine tacklers.

Longtime assistant Tony Hughes took a pay cut to leave as Mississippi State's assistant head coach and recruiting coordinator to go to **Jackson State** (3-8, 3-6) and fulfill his dream of being a head coach. Hughes showed his prowess as a recruiter by bringing in 30-plus prospects, many of whom will have an instant impact.

Hughes inherits talented veterans in quarterback LaMontiez Ivy, wide receiver Daniel Williams (54 receptions, 800 yards, 7 TDs) and defensive end/linebacker Javancy Jones; the latter two were All-SWAC first-teamers with Jones leading the FCS with 25.5 tackles for loss. Expect a breakout year from junior halfback Robert Johnson IV running behind All-SWAC lineman Markus Cook and his cohorts.

With 17 returning starters (nine on offense, eight on defense), coach James Spady is looking for his **Alabama A&M** (3-8, 3-6) team to mature in his third season. Quarterback De'Angelo "Tootie" Ballard (1,516 passing yards, 9 TDs) is back to pace the offense while linebacker Bryan Brower (76 tackles) leads the defense. Octayvious Miles amassed 1,002 yards as a kick returner last year, averaging 21.3 yards an attempt to earn All-SWAC honors.

Wide receiver/kick returner Booker Chambers' selection as SWAC Freshman of the Year was one of the bright spots for **Mississippi Valley State** (1-10, 1-8) last season. Slade Jarman and Thurston Rubin Jr. are expected to wage a battle for starting-quarterback duties. The defense will be built around middle linebacker Ladrelin Cheatam and safety Marquis Green, who led the SWAC with seven interceptions as a freshman.

WEST DIVISION

Among the impact Division 1 transfers landed by **Grambling State** (9-3, 9-0) coach Broderick Fobbs was former Ole Miss quarterback Devante Kincade, who replaces last year's SWAC Offensive Player of the Year, Johnathan Williams, whose 37 TD passes tied for most in the FCS. He can count on running backs Martez Carter (876 rushing yards, 9 TDs) and Jestin Kelly (720, 4) coupled with productive wide receivers Chad Williams (64 receptions, 1,012 yards, 10 TDs) and Verlan Hunter (32, 402, 8).

Linebacker Arkez Cooper and safety Guy Stallworth are All-SWAC performers returning to the defense.

The excitement at **Prairie View A&M** (9-2, 8-1) includes the return of senior Trey Green, the triggerman of the SWAC's top offense that averaged 44.9 points a game, along with the new on-campus 15,000-seat Panther Stadium set to debut Sept. 3 in the Labor Day Classic against crosstown rival Texas Southern. Coach Willie Simmons brought in a trio of running backs to make up for the loss of do-everything back Johnta Hebert and his SWAC-best 201.2 all-purpose yards per game. Standout wide receiver Nick Pitre hopes to return from injury and team with KhaDarel Hodge to give the Panthers an outstanding receiving duo. Sophomore lineman DeVohn Reed and senior defensive back Marquice O'Leary anchor the defense.

Southern (6-5, 6-3) quarterback Austin Howard had another productive season and returns to lead an offense featuring SWAC rushing champion Lenard Tillery (1,211 yards, 14 TDs) and six other offensive starters. Linebacker Aaron Tiller led the league in sacks (10) and spearheads a defensive unit that includes fellow linebackers Kentavious Preston and Roshaud Turner and All-SWAC secondary man Danny Johnson. The Jags are again hampered by the lack of a spring practice due to NCAA sanctions imposed by low APR scores.

Literally no one is a bigger target than **Texas Southern** (3-7, 2-7) standout wide receiver Derrick Griffin (6-7, 230 pounds), who averaged 33.4 yards on his 11 receiving touchdowns in 2015. First-year head coach Michael Haywood hopes to build on good years from quarterback Averion Hurts (997 passing yards, 14 TDs, 3 INTs) and running back Darrell Robinson (533 rushing yards, 6.1 ypc, 6 TDs). Linebackers Jamal Lucas and Zack Bamijoko and safety Archie Rice are the top returning defenders.

Linebacker Willie Duncan (118 tackles) is the lone **Arkansas-Pine Bluff** (2-9, 1-8) returnee from the All-SWAC Team and returns to lead the Golden Lions' defense. Coach Monte Coleman has brought in former Howard offensive coordinator Ted White to install a spread attack that will better utilize quarterback Brandon Duncan, wide receiver Willie Young (49 receptions) and running back Brian Handley.

DIVISION 2 PRESEASON TOP 25

1. **Northwest Missouri State**
2. **Grand Valley State**
3. **West Georgia**
4. **Indiana (Pa.)**
5. **Shepherd**
6. **Colorado School of Mines**
7. **Humboldt State**
8. **Ashland**
9. **Slippery Rock**
10. **Indianapolis**
11. **Colorado State-Pueblo**
12. **Henderson State**
13. **Tuskegee**
14. **North Alabama**
15. **Catawba**
16. **Minnesota State**
17. **Ferris State**
18. **California (Pa.)**
19. **Bemidji State**
20. **Midwestern State**
21. **Florida Tech**
22. **Colorado Mesa**
23. **Augustana (S.D.)**
24. **Emporia State**
25. **Assumption**

DIVISION 2 ALL-AMERICA TEAM

	OFFENSE
QB	**Justin Dvorak** 6-0, 200/Sr., Colorado Mines
RB	**Ja'Quan Gardner** 5-7, 190/Jr., Humboldt State
RB	**Austin Ekeler** 5-8, 180/Sr., Western State
OL	**Jake Daugherty** 6-2, 294/Jr., Ferris State
OL	**Joe LoSchiavo** 6-3, 290/Sr., Slippery Rock
OL	**Stephen Evans** 6-4, 302/Sr., North Alabama
OL	**Ethan Cooper** 6-4, 320/Sr., Indiana (Pa.)
OL	**Jordan Morgan** 6-4, 300/Sr., Kutztown
TE	**Kenny Johnston** 6-4, 195/Sr., Florida Tech
WR	**Billy Brown** 6-4, 236/Sr., Shepherd
WR	**Matt Williams** 6-2, 195/Sr., Grand Valley State

	DEFENSE
DL	**Collin Bevins** 6-6, 286/Sr., NW Missouri State
DL	**Marcus Martin** 6-3, 245/Jr., Slippery Rock
DL	**Dylan Donahue** 6-3, 245/Sr., West Georgia
DL	**Richard Nase Jr.** 6-1, 210/So., Shippensburg
LB	**Connor Harris** 6-0, 235/Sr., Lindenwood
LB	**Kyle Kitchens** 6-2, 205/Jr., Catawba
LB	**Jordan Herdman** 6-2, 231/Sr., Simon Fraser
DB	**Carlo Thomas** 6-2, 185/Jr., Johnson C. Smith
DB	**Kevin Berg** 5-11, 182/Sr., NW Missouri State
DB	**Aaron Terry** 5-11, 195/Sr., California (Pa.)
DB	**Jonah McCutcheon** 6-2, 186/Jr., Tuskegee

	SPECIALISTS
K	**Austin Morton** 5-9, 168/Jr., Emporia State
P	**Brett Benes**, Charleston (W.Va.), Sr.

Loaded Northwest Mizzou could end 10-year run of no repeats

BY GREGG DEWALT
Florence (Ala.) TimesDaily

Recent history would suggest that Division 2 football will not have a repeat champion in December.

That's not to say Northwest Missouri State won't win it all again. The Bearcats have won two of the past three titles and will be in the playoff mix again this season. However, it has been nine years since Grand Valley State (2005-06) won back-to-back national championships, the longest streak without a repeat winner since Division 2 went to a playoff system in 1974.

From 1974 until 1980, no team successfully defended its championship. Texas State (1981-82) was the first team to win back-to-back titles, setting in motion a trend of repeat champions. From 1981 to 2006, there were seven repeat champions, including North Alabama, which still holds the record with three consecutive national titles (1993-95). Other teams to win two in a row include Northern Colorado, Northwest Missouri State and North Dakota State, now an FCS powerhouse that twice earned two straight titles.

Northwest Missouri State coach Adam Dorrel has a quick answer when asked why teams now have trouble repeating when it was a trend for more than two decades. "Parity," he says. "There are more good teams now. A lot of teams have a chance to win it."

Dorrel, whose Bearcats have won two of the past three championships and have played in the title game nine times since 1998, makes a good point. Where the division was once dominated by teams from four conferences, more teams are getting into the championship mix. In the past four seasons, Shepherd (Mountain East), Colorado State-Pueblo (Rocky Mountain), Lenoir-Rhyne (South Atlantic) and Winston-Salem State (Central Intercollegiate) have played for or won (Pueblo) D2 championships.

With a solid returning nucleus, Northwest Missouri can become the first team in a decade to defend its title.

Northwest Missouri State coach **Adam Dorrel**

DORREL: COLIN E. BRALEY / AP

TOP 25

With those three national titles since 2009, **Northwest Missouri State** (15-0) never seems to be in rebuilding mode. How dominant were the Bearcats in 2015? Only three teams scored more than 20 points against them in 15 games. Tackle Collin Bevins (15.5 sacks) returns for a defense that led the nation in scoring defense and rushing defense. The biggest hole to fill is at quarterback, where Brady Bolles, who won two NCAA championships, has graduated.

Last year, **Grand Valley State** (12-3) posted its 16th straight winning season and came within a field goal of playing for the national championship when it lost to Shepherd 34-32 in the NCAA semifinals. Quarterback Bart Williams returns to guide the offense after throwing a D2-high 45 touchdown passes in 2015. His favorite target, 6-2 wide receiver Matt Williams, returns as well after hauling in 17 TD passes.

West Georgia (12-2) has made back-to-back semifinal playoff appearances in two seasons under coach Will Hall, and the Wolves should be hunting a national title again. West Georgia's offense, which averaged 37.8 points per game last year, should be potent with the return of 1,000-yard rusher Devontae

Jackson and the addition of quarterback Will Gardner, a Louisville transfer who started seven games for the Cardinals.

With 21 returning full-time or part-time starters, **Indiana of Pennsylvania** (9-3) is the team to beat in the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC). The Crimson Hawks' three losses in 2015 were by a total of six points, and they return sophomore Lenny Williams, a quarterback who rushed for 1,229 yards and 12 TDs last season, and running back Chris Temple (1,212 yards, 17 TDs).

In his 30th year at the West Virginia school, coach Monte Cater won a 15th conference title and took **Shepherd** (13-1) all the way to the championship game before losing to perennial power Northwest Missouri. The Rams won two of three playoff games by four points or fewer. Among 15 returning starters is QB Jeff Ziemba, who threw 30 touchdown passes and finished seventh for the Harlon Hill Trophy, and wideout Billy Brown (89 receptions, 1,492 yards).

Colorado School of Mines (8-3) won seven straight to open last season before dropping three in a row. The Orediggers' offense should be in good shape with the return of QB Justin Dvorak, who has thrown for 8,882 yards and 81 TDs in 25 starts, and tailback Sam Seeton (1,150 rushing yards, 15 TDs).

Humboldt State (10-2) won the Great Northwest Athletic Conference last year for the first time since 2011 and then knocked off Augustana for its first postseason win in 47 years. Coach Rob Smith will rely on Division 2's leading rusher, Ja'Quan Gardner (2,266 yards).

Ashland (10-1) beat Grand Valley and was undefeated in the regular season for the second time in four years. With key offensive performers like QB Travis Tarnowski, running back Vance Settlemire and tight end Adam Shaheen, plus the top three tacklers returning, the Eagles should challenge Grand Valley State for a conference title.

For the first time in 28 years, **Slippery Rock** (12-2) will have a new face on the sidelines after the retirement of longtime head coach George Mihalik. Shawn Lutz, who spent the past 20 years on staff as defensive coordinator, takes over for Mihalik and inherits seven starters from a defense that led the nation in takeaways. On offense, Shamar Greene returns after rushing for 1,545 yards and 14 TDs.

Indianapolis (10-2) has won consecutive Great Lakes Valley Conference titles and is 52-18 in six seasons under coach Bob Bartolomeo. Andrew Walker, who rushed for 20 scores last season, is the Greyhounds' top returning offensive player.

Colorado State-Pueblo (12-2) went three rounds in the playoffs in defense of its 2014 title before falling to Grand Valley State last year. Key losses for coach John Wristen's squad include running back Cameron McDondle, the nation's second-leading rusher, Morgan Fox (17 sacks) and All-America offensive lineman Zach Martinez. Bernard McDondle, who rushed for 1,480 yards last year while sharing the backfield with his brother Cameron, is the top offensive player returning.

Henderson State (11-2) collected the first postseason win in school history when it beat Sioux Falls in the first round of the 2015 playoffs. The Reddies, who have had six consecutive winning campaigns, won eight of nine games decided by eight or fewer points. Among 17 returning starters is 5-8 tailback Jaquan Cole, Offensive Player of the Year in the Great American.

Tuskegee (10-3) won its first two playoff games in school history last year in reaching the NCAA quarterfinals and has now made three consecutive postseason appearances. With 17 returning starters, including All-America candidates in safety Jonah McCutcheon and offensive lineman Leeward Brown, coach Willie Slater's team remains the one to beat in the SIAC.

North Alabama (9-3) has won or shared three consecutive Gulf South Conference championships and should again be among the league's elite with 17 returning starters, including eight all-conference performers.

Catawba (9-3) returns its top six tacklers, including linebacker Kyle Kitchens (13 sacks, 23 tackles for loss), from a defense that held seven teams to 14 points or fewer. Mike Sheehan returns at quarterback after leading the Indians with 12 rushing TDs in 2015.

Coach Todd Hoffner has some rebuilding to do at **Minnesota State** (10-2) after losing 13 starters, including Josh Gordon (14 sacks, 22.5 tackles for loss), Defensive Player of the Year in the Northern Sun. The three-time defending conference champs should have another good passing attack with the return of QB Ricky Lloyd and receivers Brent Esser and Ty Dennis.

Coach Tony Annese might find life at **Ferris State** (11-1) a little tougher with the departure of two-time Harlon Hill Trophy winner Jason Vander Laan, who accounted for 51 touchdowns last season, and All-America defensive end Justin Zimmer. Trevor Bermingham seems to be next in line to take over for Vander Laan at quarterback.

New coach Gary Dunn comes to **California of Pennsylvania** (8-3) after a stint as offensive coordinator at Duquesne. He inherits 15 returning starters, including 6-0, 220-pound running back John Franklin III (17 rushing TDs) and 1,000-yard wide receiver Garry Brown.

Bemidji State (7-4), which won the NSIC North Division title last year, started 0-3 before winning seven of its final eight. Coach Jeff Tesch loses only three starters and returns a nucleus that includes QB Jordan Hein and cornerback Gunner Olszewski (7 INTs).

Last season, **Midwestern State** (10-2) lost only to Lone Star Conference champion Texas A&M-Commerce and 2014 national champion Colorado State-Pueblo. However, coach Bill Maskill must replace safety Marqui Christian, winner of the Cliff Harris Trophy given to the top small-college defender.

Florida Tech (7-4) just missed a playoff berth when it lost to Valdosta State in its final game last season. The Panthers return most of their skill players, including tight end Kenny Johnston (10 TD catches in 2015).

Colorado Mesa (9-2) returns 15 starters from a team that lost by three points to Midwestern State early in the season, including leading tackler Tom Saager and quarterback Sean Rubalcaba, who threw 15 touchdown passes and rushed for 411 yards in 10 games before getting hurt.

Augustana (9-3) posted only the second nine-win season in school history last year, falling to Humboldt State in the first round of the playoffs. Coach Jerry Olszewski has plenty to work with while trying for back-to-back nine-win seasons in Sioux Falls, S.D. The Vikings are sure to move the ball with Northern Sun Offensive Player of the Year Trey Heid returning at quarterback and wideout Charlie Hayes back as his top target.

Emporia State (11-3) reached the NCAA quarterfinals last season but lost the throw-and-catch combination of QB Brent Wilson (40 TD passes) and wideout Kavaski Ervin. The Hornets return one of the best kickers in the country in Austin Morton, who made good on 22 of 25 field goals last year.

Assumption (11-2) represented the Northeast-10 in the NCAA playoffs last year thanks to a 10-game winning streak after losing in the second week. The Greyhounds appear primed for another great season with the return of receivers Ashton Grant and Deonte Harris, who combined for 20 TD catches last year.

Linfield looks to break Mount Union, Whitewater stranglehold on D3 rule

BY M.D. GOENS
Sporting News Yearbooks contributor

A genius is not needed to solve the puzzle of how to win the Division 3 national championship.

"You know you've got to find a way to beat Mount Union and Wisconsin-Whitewater, usually in the same year and usually at their home field," says Linfield coach Joe Smith. "The trouble is no one has been able to do that in a long, long time."

Mount Union and Whitewater are the two perennial powers of this division, a fact no one disputes. At least one of the two teams has played in the title game each year since 2004. If you're counting, Mount Union, which has played in 19 of the past 23 championship games, has won 12 since 1993. Whitewater has six national championships since 2007.

Smith says you've got to have quick and speedy athletes to challenge Mount Union and big and physical players to compete with Whitewater.

"It takes a complete team; you've got to be big and fast," Smith says. "Mount Union is explosive, incredibly fast, well coached and expect to win. Whitewater is bigger, very talented and loves to compete. And if you are in the West bracket, where there seem to be more quality teams, you get beat to a pulp before you get to the last game. It's incredibly challenging."

TOP 25

Smith's **Linfield** team could be up to that challenge, with key returners back on both sides of the ball from a 12-1 squad. The Wildcats face a stiff early-season test at Mary Hardin-Baylor. Incidentally, those are the last two teams to play in a national championship game that did not involve Mount Union or Whitewater. Linfield won that 2004 contest.

Sam Riddle (2,425 yards passing, 35 TDs) is back at quarterback to lead the spread attack and the 6-2, 205-pound senior will be joined in the backfield by Spencer Payne, who rushed for 1,133 yards last season.

Linfield's defense is always stout and tackles Ty Farber and Zach Grate are back along with linebackers Jake Reimer, Jason Farlow and Mitchell Kekel. Three starters return to the secondary, including Kennedy Johnson, also a dangerous return man.

On paper, it appears **Mount Union** could take a step backwards this year with only seven starters returning, including only two on defense. But that's a bit misleading for the defending national champs. A lot of their underclassmen received experience last year during a 15-game unbeaten season. The offensive line, led by All-America center Mitch Doraty, will help a new quarterback get settled. Receivers Tim Kennedy and Jordan Hargrove along with running back Bradley Mitchell have big-play ability. On defense, All-America junior lineman Mike Vidal always turns heads.

Wisconsin-Whitewater is certainly a top contender. The Warhawks have advanced to the national semifinals in 10 of the past 11 seasons and return 14 of the starting

Quarterback Sam Riddle and Linfield sit atop our Division 3 preseason Top 25 list.

RIDDLE: HANNAH FOSLIEN / AP

DIVISION 3 PRESEASON TOP 25

1. **Linfield** (12-1 in 2015)
2. **Mount Union** (15-0)
3. **Wisconsin-Whitewater** (12-2)
4. **Mary Hardin-Baylor** (10-2)
5. **St. Thomas** (14-1)
6. **Wesley** (11-2)
7. **Wisconsin-Oshkosh** (11-2)
8. **Wheaton** (11-1)
9. **Saint John's** (10-2)
10. **Ohio Northern** (9-3)
11. **Hardin-Simmons** (9-2)
12. **Albright** (10-2)
13. **Johns Hopkins** (11-1)
14. **Texas Lutheran** (8-2)
15. **Whitworth** (9-2)
16. **Thomas More** (11-1)
17. **Washington & Lee** (10-1)
18. **SUNY Cortland** (9-3)
19. **St. Lawrence** (8-3)
20. **Trinity University** (8-2)
21. **John Carroll** (8-2)
22. **Wisconsin-Platteville** (8-2)
23. **North Central** (7-3)
24. **Washington & Jefferson** (8-2)
25. **Adrian** (7-3)

DIVISION 3 ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	**Sam Riddle** 6-2, 205/Sr., Linfield
RB	**Jordan Roberts** 6-0, 225/Sr., St. Thomas
RB	**Sam Benger** 5-8, 190/Sr., Carnegie Mellon
OL	**Peter Gibson** 6-0, 281/Sr., Wheaton
OL	**Michael LaSala** 6-3, 260/Sr., Washington & Lee
OL	**Mitch Doraty** 6-0, 275/Sr., Mount Union
OL	**Tony Koepnick** 6-3, 310/Sr., Wisc.-Whitewater
OL	**Broderick Jenkins** 6-0, 270/Sr., Mary Hardin-Baylor
TE	**Nick Kiourkas** 6-3, 220/Jr., Whitworth
WR	**Brad Garcia** 6-1, 200/Jr., Hartwick
WR	**Bryce Shade** 5-8, 175/Sr., Wesley

DEFENSE

DL	**Teidrick Smith** 6-2, 240/Sr., Mary Hardin-Baylor
DL	**Chyron Brown-Wallace** 6-0, 280/Sr., St. Lawrence
DL	**Ryan Winter** 6-2, 273/Sr., St. Thomas
DL	**Mike Vidal** 6-3, 240/Jr., Mount Union
LB	**Carter Hanson** 5-10, 190/Sr., Saint John's
LB	**Julian Turner** 6-1, 215/Sr., Trinity University
LB	**Zach Schmerge** 6-1, 240/Jr., Ohio Northern
DB	**Jack Toner** 6-2, 175/Sr., Johns Hopkins
DB	**Austin Davis** 5-11, 190/Sr., Kean
DB	**Deion Jones** 6-2, 188/Sr., Wisconsin-Stevens Point
DB	**Carson Lassiter** 5-10, 200/Sr., SUNY Cortland

SPECIALISTS

PK	**Andrew Tutsie** 6-1, 208/Sr., Wabash
P	**Ryan Anderson** 6-3, 205/Jr., Olivet

22 from last year. That includes quarterback Chris Nelson, receiver Marcus Hudson and an offensive line that returns intact and is led by 6-3, 310-pound All-American Tony Koepnick. Three starters on the defensive line are back, including a real standout in Brandon Tamsett.

Mary Hardin-Baylor has plenty of familiar faces back–15 in all from a squad that advanced at least to the second round for the 12th consecutive year. While a search for a starting quarterback is conducted (Blake Jackson is the favorite), look for running back Duane Thompson to carry the load. All-America guard Broderick Jenkins is the best offensive lineman. Also back is one of the country's best defenders in 6-2, 240-pound senior end Teidrick Smith, a sack specialist and two-time league Defensive Player of the Year.

For the second time in four years, **St. Thomas** made it to the championship game only to lose to Mount Union. The Tommies have several offensive weapons back despite heavy losses to the starting 22. Running back Jordan Roberts (2,092 rushing yards, 34 TDs and 218 points) was Division 3's best last season and the 6-0, 225-pound senior returns. Jacques Perra, a 6-3, 223-pound transfer who was a backup at Minnesota, must deliver at quarterback. The defense, led by 6-2, 273-pound All-America nose tackle Ryan Winter, allowed fewer than 10 points eight times last year.

If a capable new quarterback is found, **Wesley** can expect a 12th straight playoff run. The weapons are there with wideouts Bryce Shade (1,427 receiving yards) and James Okike (1,426) and running back Jamar Baynard (1,381 rushing yards, 17 TDs). Tackle Matt Gono leads a rebuilt line. Eight of the starting 11 on defense are led by linebacker Samer Manna.

Keep an eye on **Wisconsin-Oshkosh**, which has won 27 of its last 30 games in the competitive Wisconsin Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WIAC). The Titans must replace four of the front seven on defense but return their top two tacklers in Reese Dziedzic and Branden Lloyd. The skill positions on offense are superb. Quarterback Brett Kasper (2,968 passing yards, 27 TDs, 6 INTs) is the leader. Dylan Hecker is a dual threat in the backfield to catch and run the ball.

Wheaton returns nine starters on an offensive unit that averaged more than 460 yards per game last season. All-America guard Peter Gibson is one of four offensive linemen back. Quarterback Johnny Peltz will turn to tight end Zach Lindquist and running back Sola Olateju for offense. The defense must replace five starters.

The rebuilding process is almost complete at **Saint John's**. With 15 of 22 starters back, the Johnnies will feature one of the nation's best defenses. Linebacker Carter Hanson and lineman Peyton Thiry are candidates for postseason honors.

Ohio Northern has become a solid team with a chance to crack the top 10 as 13 starters return from a nine-win team. Sophomore quarterback Will Freed, returning from injury, threw for 439 yards in the opener last season and will have Reed Allen as his top target. All-America linebacker Zach Schmerge leads an experienced defense.

There are 56 lettermen back to get **Hardin-Simmons** to the playoffs for the third straight year. The Cowboys are in good hands on offense with quarterback Ryan Breton and play-making wideout Reese Childress. The defense revolves around linebacker/safety Matthew Hawkins.

Albright returns 16 starters from a team that played two playoff games in 2015. The Lions have big-time players on the line–Jonni Cassano and John McKeever on offense and Rich Kuhn on defense. Sophomore QB Mike Knight has several targets to choose from.

There's plenty of experience back at **Johns Hopkins**, including QB Jonathan Germano, receiver Bradley Munday (1,066 receiving yards) and running back Stuart Walters. The Blue Jays' defense is led by All-America secondary ace Jack Toner.

A team that continues to be overlooked is **Texas Lutheran**. Marquis Barrolle, who led the nation in rushing in 2014, will provide a spark at running back. Receivers Jekovan Holmes and Caleb Oliver are hard to cover for new QB Zach Galindo.

If two new offensive linemen deliver, **Whitworth** will be a strong national contender. Sixteen starters are back, including QB Ian Kolste and All-America tight end Nick Kiourkas.

Thomas More is a consistent winner with seven league titles in the past eight years. Defense will rule the day, with cornerback Johnny Lammers, end Rodderick Darden and linebackers Austin Copeland and Tre' Tunstill returning.

Washington & Lee returns nine of 12 all-conference players, including those responsible for 98.8 percent of the team's offense last season. Running backs Connor Chess, Marshall Hollerith and Duncan Maxwell are expected to find plenty of rushing room behind a strong line led by preseason All-American Michael LaSala.

Senior quarterback Steven Ferreira (3,127 passing yards and 29 TDs) will make **SUNY Cortland** tough to stop. Receivers Jon Mannix, Nick Wagner and Jake Smith each had at least 44 catches a year ago. Secondary standout Carson Lassiter, a preseason All-American, is the leader on defense.

With 19 starters returning from a playoff team, **St. Lawrence** could be hard to handle. The offensive line returns intact but the search is on for a new QB, where junior Sean Richardson has the edge. On defense, the key performer is All-America lineman Chyron Brown-Wallace (11.5 sacks).

The rebuilding is almost complete at **Trinity University** in San Antonio, where 14 starters return, including eight from a dominant defense. Julian Turner, a 6-1, 215-pound senior, is among the nation's best linebackers.

John Carroll appears ready to leap forward. The Blue Streaks could be excellent offensively if one of their young quarterbacks produces. Wideout Marshall Howell and running back Ro Golphin are reliable. The defense turns to standout end Ray Brown, cornerback Mike Hollins and safety Jovon Dawson.

Another dangerous team in the WIAC is **Wisconsin-Platteville**. Nine offensive starters are back, including senior quarterback Tom Kelly (2,653 passing yards, 28 TDs) and 6-6, 220-pound senior wideout Dan Arnold (921 receiving yards). On defense, linebacker Marty McGrail and lineman Austin Young lead the way.

Good things could be in store for **North Central**, which lost three close games to ranked teams last year. Sixteen starters return from a 7-3 team. It will be hard to stop shifty running backs Austin Breunig and Oshayne Brown. Junior linebacker Justin Stuursma is the top defender.

The accuracy of senior quarterback Pete Coughlin (3,023 passing yards, 25 TDs) makes **Washington & Jefferson** dangerous. He has not been intercepted in his last six games. Coughlin's top target is Jesse Zubik (55 receptions for 1,054 yards last year).

Experience from 15 returning starters should elevate **Adrian**, which finished 7-3 last season. The Bulldogs have a good running back in 5-8 junior Emmanuel Stewart and a strong front seven on defense.

Derrick Willies, WR, Texas Tech

TOP JUCO PLAYERS MOVING ON

NCAA School in italics

	OFFENSE
QB	**Jerod Evans**, 6-3/225, Trinity Valley (Texas) *Virginia Tech*
RB	**Natereace Strong**, 6-1/215, Hinds (Miss.) *Missouri*
RB	**Mark Thompson**, 6-2/230, Dodge City (Kan.) *Florida*
OL	**Charles Baldwin**, 6-5/310, ASA (N.Y.) *Alabama*
OL	**Garett Bolles**, 6-5/300, Snow (Utah) *Utah*
OL	**A.J. McCollum**, 6-2/295, C.C. San Francisco *Arizona State*
OL	**Malcolm Pridgeon**, 6-8/310, Nassau (N.Y.) *Ohio State*
OL	**Dwayne Wallace**, 6-4/320, Riverside (Calif.) *California*
TE	**Trevon Wesco**, 6-5/260, Lackawanna (Pa.) *West Virginia*
WR	**Taj Williams**, 6-3/190, Iowa Western *TCU*
WR	**Derrick Willies**, 6-4/210, Trinity Valley (Texas) *Texas Tech*

	DEFENSE
DL	**Jonathan Kongbo**, 6-6/265, Ariz. Western *Tennessee*
DL	**Dequinton Osborne**, 6-0/290, Kilgore (Texas) *Baylor*
DL	**Dougladson Subtyl**, 6-4/250, V. Valley (Calif.) *Arizona State*
DL	**Handsome Tanielu**, 6-2/305, Snow (Utah) *BYU*
LB	**Tyree Horton**, 6-1/225, Highland (Kan.) *TCU*
LB	**A.J. Hotchkins**, 6-0/235, Riverside (Calif.) *Oregon*
LB	**David Luafatasaga**, 6-4/225, Ariz. Western *Utah*
DB	**Desmond Henderson**, 6-1/180, Dodge City (Kan.) *Tennessee*
DB	**Jamarcus King**, 6-2/180, Coffeyville (Kan.) *South Carolina*
DB	**Markell Simmons**, 6-1/200, Pima (Ariz.) *TCU*
DB	**Kyzir White**, 6-3/210, Lackawanna (Pa.) *West Virginia*

	SPECIALISTS
K	**Jake Lanski**, 5-9 /195, Ventura (Calif.) *San Jose State*
P	**Corey Bojorquez**, 6-1 /210, Cerritos (Calif.) *New Mexico*
RS	**Andre Wilson**, 5-11/180, Trinity Valley (Texas) *UAB*

Voyage to national JUCO title often flows through Mississippi

BY TONY JIMENEZ
JC Reports

On a map they are mere dots and the sounds of their names do not conjure up life in a big city. But make no mistake, from Northwest (Senatobia) in the northern part of the state to Gulf Coast (Perkinston) in the south, Copiah-Lincoln in the west, Scooba (East Mississippi) in the east and East Central (Decatur) near the middle, coaches at big-time FBS schools in search of prime talent know all about the junior colleges in Mississippi. The Magnolia State is home to 14 jucos that play in two divisions of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges. Last season, Northwest Mississippi won the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) championship and ranked No. 1 in the final poll. Copiah-Lincoln finished No. 4, East Mississippi No. 7, Mississippi Gulf Coast No. 8 and East Central No. 10.

Over the past 12 seasons, in towns as small as Scooba (population 700), a Mississippi two-year school has taken home six NJCAA championships (by four different schools); they have won four titles in the past five seasons. Since 2004, that's twice as many championships as any other state with NJCAA schools.

How small are the towns? Wesson, where Copiah-Lincoln is located, has one blinking red light. Scooba is still waiting for its first fast-food restaurant. No matter. Conference rules allow only eight out-of-state recruits on 55-player rosters, so most of the players are from talent-rich Mississippi. Ole Miss quarterback Chad Kelly, the nephew of NFL Hall of Famer Jim Kelly, went to East Mississippi, a school that has won three NJCAA titles (2011, '13, '14) in the past five years. Alabama's 2015 national championship team included defensive linemen D.J. Pettway and Jarran Reed of East Mississippi.

While the players are instrumental, good coaches help fuel Mississippi's juco success. Glenn Davis (Copiah-Lincoln),

Florida State transfer De'Andre Johnson brings an instant offensive impact to East Mississippi.

Chad Huff (Mississippi Gulf Coast), Benjy Parker (Northwest Mississippi), Buddy Stephens (East Mississippi) and East Central's Ken Karcher, the former head coach at Liberty, are among the country's best and all push the right buttons to make those dots on the map loom large.

TOP 10

1 Snow (Utah), 10-1 in 2015
If defense wins championships (see: Broncos, Denver), Snow will be the NJCAA champ at season's end. The Badgers, a consistent winner on the juco circuit, have seven starters returning on a defense led by All-America lineman John Penisini (6-3, 305 pounds). Dax Eisinger (6-1, 230) and Nela Tuuhetaufa (6-2, 235) are top-notch linebackers, while safety Braxton Winterton (6-2, 200) anchors a secondary that ranked fourth nationally in interceptions (22) last season. The offense is suspect on the line, but look for 6-4 Australian punter Dom Panazzola to bail the team out as needed.

2 City Coll. of San Francisco, 12-1
A year ago, CCSF basked in the limelight when it won the prestigious California state championship game over Saddleback, 26-14. The reloaded Rams have a proven nucleus of returnees among their top 22 players, most notably QB Anthony Gordon (6-3, 180 pounds), running back Namane Modise (MVP of last year's state title game), All-America offensive lineman Elliott Baker (6-6, 290), defensive tackle Tevita Fehoko

JOHNSON: MARK WALLHEISER / AP; WILLIES: JUSTIN HAYWORTH / AP

(6-2, 320), linebacker Anthony Giusti (6-1, 230) and All-America defensive back Deante Fortenberry (5-10, 190). Second-year man Jimmy Collins, a former CCSF quarterback, is fast making a name for himself as the Rams' head coach.

3 Northwest Mississippi, 11-1
Two months after leading the Rangers to their third NJCAA championship in program history, coach Jack Wright resigned to become offensive line coach at Southern Miss. Benjy Parker, Northwest's defensive coordinator the past two seasons, is now a head coach for the first time. Making the transition easier will be three super sophomores: pro-style All-America quarterback Gardner Minshew, explosive and speedy defensive end Quondarius Qualls and ex-Oklahoma Sooner cornerback Tito Windham.

4 East Mississippi, 8-1
East Mississippi handed NJCAA champion Northwest Mississippi its only loss in 2015 (a big one, 49-16) and once again the Lions are loaded. There are two instant-impact additions in Florida State transfer De'Andre Johnson at quarterback and Florida Atlantic import Raphael Leonard, a dynamic wide receiver. They'll join returning offensive linemen Demetrius Gleaton, Hunter Godfrey and Thaddeus Roberts, plus holdover playmakers Mario Lanier (wideout) and Isaiah Wright (running back). All-America defensive back T.J. Jallow and linemen Rasool Clemons (6-6, 215 pounds) and D.J. Henderson (6-0, 290) are among six starters back on a defense that gave up only 14.8 points per game in 2015 (No. 3 in the NJCAA).

5 Iowa Western, 10-2
The winningest NJCAA program since 2010, the Reivers boast 86 who have gone on to FBS careers during that span, and in the past four years they have played for the national championship twice (winning it in 2012). Located in Council Bluffs, across the Missouri River from Omaha, Neb., most Iowa Western teams have been known for powerful offenses, but the defense appears to be closing the gap this year. Look for good things from QB Andre Nunez (6-1, 205 pounds), All-America running back Jeff Jones, 6-4 wide receiver Datrin Guyton, 6-4, 235-pound defensive end Andrew Van Ginkel and linebacker Shaq Jones.

6 Mississippi Gulf Coast, 8-3
Experience is always a big plus and the Bulldogs have plenty with 13 returning starters. Among the best is Isaiah Buggs, a 6-4, 260-pound defensive end with a high motor. Other top talent returning includes All-America kicker Joshua Rowland, cornerback Octavis Johnson, 6-4 wide receiver Brandon Martin and 6-5, 320-pound offensive tackle D'Marcus Hayes. Big things are expected from freshmen Daquan Newkirk, a 6-2, 275-pound defensive lineman, and Darel Middleton, a 6-6, 250-pound tight end. Gulf Coast has been in the NJCAA Top 20 poll for 141 consecutive weeks.

2016 JUCO SUPER SOPHOMORES

OFFENSE	POS	HT/WT	JUCO
Gardner Minshew	QB	6-1/215	Northwest Mississippi
Jeff Jones	RB	6-1/190	Iowa Western
Deion Walker	RB	6-0/195	San Bernardino Valley (Calif.)
Elliott Baker	OL	6-6/290	City College of San Francisco
Tommy Champion	OL	6-5/315	Copiah-Lincoln (Miss.)
Jake Coleman	OL	6-4/295	Ventura (Calif.)
Dennis Daley	OL	6-6/310	Georgia Military
Justice Powers	OL	6-4/305	Trinity Valley (Texas)
Ravian Pierce	TE	6-3/230	Southwest Mississippi
Datrin Guyton	WR	6-4/200	Iowa Western
Mike Wilson	WR	6-3/190	Long Beach (Calif.)

DEFENSE	POS	HT/WT	JUCO
Isaiah Buggs	DL	6-4/260	Mississippi Gulf Coast
John Penisini	DL	6-3/305	Snow (Utah)
Quondarius Qualls	DL	6-2/225	Northwest Mississippi
Markel Winters	DL	6-5/260	Jones County (Miss.)
Ryan Guthrie	LB	6-2/215	Ellsworth (Iowa)
Gary Johnson	LB	6-2/225	Dodge City (Kan.)
Jordan Kunaszyk	LB	6-3/235	American River (Calif.)
Deante Fortenberry	DB	5-10/190	City College of San Francisco
T.J. Jallow	DB	6-1/210	East Mississippi
DeAnthony Lee	DB	5-9/175	Cisco (Texas)
Octavious Morgan	DB	6-0/190	Butler (Kan.)

SPECIALISTS	POS	HT/WT	JUCO
Joshua Rowland	K	5-11/190	Mississippi Gulf Coast
Jordan Colleary	P	6-1/175	Dean (Mass.)
Ramiah Marshall	RET	5-7/160	San Mateo (Calif.)

7 Riverside (Calif.), 8-3
At 6-8 and 320 pounds, sophomore offensive tackle Jordan Poland will make life easier for 5-10, 205-pound running back Seth Acda, a punishing runner with great vision. Poland and Acda headline five returning offensive starters. With five starters also back on defense—including 6-4, 260-pound end Michael Taylor, 6-0, 185-pound cornerback Tareke Lewis and ex-Fresno State linebacker Xavier Ulutu (6-1, 240)—the Tigers should be improved over 2015. Lewis has good coverage skills and is an explosive kick returner while Ulutu is a big hitter.

8 Trinity Valley (Texas), 7-3
They take football seriously in Athens and more often than not the Cardinals deliver big seasons. Don't look for that to change. On the heels of a seven-game winning streak to end 2015, Trinity Valley returns eight full-time starters, with five on offense. Justice Powers, a 6-4, 305-pound offensive lineman, will help clear the way for rugged 6-3, 215-pound sophomore running back LaVonte Owens, who is equally effective running the ball or catching it. The defense will be led by 6-1, 215-pound linebacker Daquan Patton, 6-1, 250-pound end Jalen Scott and 6-2, 195-pound cornerback Michael Sam.

9 Butler (Kan.), 9-2
In El Dorado, coach Tim Schaffner is a humble guy who has a big appetite for winning. Last year, Schaffner's Grizzlies lost two of their last three games after running up an 8-0 record. A more consistent Butler team is expected to show up this time around. Look for 6-1, 200-pound quarterback Colton Howell, who started four games as a freshman, to lead the offense. Defensively, linebacker Tony Jones and cornerback Octavious Morgan are prime-time hitters who started every game last season. The 2015 Grizzlies sent 29 players to four-year schools.

10 Butte (Calif.), 6-5
Long a staple on the national juco scene, Butte has the talent on hand to make a deep run this season—similar to its 2008 and 2013 teams that won state championships. Experience is plentiful with 14 full-time starters back (eight on offense, six on defense) for coach Jeff Jordan. Look for the Roadrunners to score plenty thanks to the return of four offensive linemen, the best of whom is 6-6, 325-pound tackle Zachary Troughton. He'll open holes for productive running back Martin Fleming. Anchoring the defense will be 6-4, 250-pound end Brando Phillips and 6-0, 185-pound defensive back Dhaamir Lomax.

BEST OF THE REST

- **11. Copiah-Lincoln (Miss.),** 7-2
- **12. Long Beach City (Calif.),** 10-2
- **13. Lackawanna (Pa.),** 8-2
- **14. Saddleback (Calif.),** 10-3
- **15. Cerritos (Calif.),** 8-3
- **16. Mt. San Antonio (Calif.),** 8-3
- **17. College of DuPage,** 8-2
- **18. Ventura (Calif.),** 8-3
- **19. Navarro (Texas),** 7-4
- **20. Dodge City (Kan.),** 9-3
- **21. Georgia Military,** 8-4
- **22. Tyler (Texas),** 7-3
- **23. Fullerton (Calif.),** 6-5
- **24. Arizona Western,** 7-4
- **25. Coffeyville (Kan.),** 8-3

Krishawn Hogan, WR, Marian (Ind.)

Marian, Southern Oregon favored to meet in third straight title game

BY WILL LONG
Assistant Editor

The Marian (Ind.) Knights got their revenge against Southern Oregon in the 60th NAIA national championship game in Daytona Beach, Fla. last December. A year after falling to the Raiders in the title matchup, Marian returned the favor with a 31-14 thumping, resulting in the Knights' second national crown and first since 2012. Once again, Marian will be the front-runner to make it back to a third consecutive NAIA final, but there will be a host of challengers, led by Southern Oregon and Saint Francis.

NAIA PRESEASON TOP 10

1. **Marian (Ind.)**
2. **Southern Oregon**
3. **Saint Francis (Ind.)**
4. **Baker (Kan.)**
5. **Morningside (Iowa)**
6. **Saint Xavier (Ill.)**
7. **Grand View (Iowa)**
8. **Dakota Wesleyan (S.D.)**
9. **Montana Tech**
10. **Benedictine (Kan.)**

NAIA ALL-AMERICA TEAM

OFFENSE

QB	**Nick Ferrer**, Saint Francis (Ind.), Jr.
RB	**Nolan Saraceni**, Montana Tech, Sr.
RB	**Quan Weaver**, Pikeville (Ky.), Jr.
OL	**Hea Tuifua**, William Penn (Iowa), Sr.
OL	**Mitch Butterfield**, Friends (Kan.), Jr.
OL	**Kevin Lonergan**, Saint Xavier (Ill.), Sr.
OL	**Justin Hunter**, Saint Xavier (Ill.), Jr.
OL	**Blake Frank**, Morningside (Iowa), Sr.
TE	**Marcus Lenhardt**, College of Idaho, Jr.
WR	**Krishawn Hogan**, Marian (Ind.), Sr.
WR	**Clarence Clark**, Baker (Kan.), Jr.

DEFENSE

DL	**D'Vonn Brown**, SW Assemblies of God, Sr.
DL	**Sam Van Ginkel**, Northwestern (Iowa), Sr.
DL	**Trey Barnes**, Concordia (Neb.), Sr.
DL	**Tim Smith**, St. Francis (Ill.), Sr.
LB	**Aaron Cooper**, Kentucky Christian, Sr.
LB	**Alden Mann**, Wayland Baptist (Texas), Sr.
LB	**Shaquille Ash**, Marian (Ind.), Sr.
DB	**Julius Rucker**, Southern Oregon, Sr.
DB	**Nate Moore**, College of Idaho, Sr.
DB	**Nick Holshoe**, Concordia (Mich.), Sr.
DB	**Carl Morgan**, SW Assemblies of God, Jr.

SPECIALISTS

K	**Cristian Casillas**, MidAmerica Nazarene, Jr.
P	**Eddie Juarez**, Sterling (Kan.), Sr.

PRESEASON TOP 10

Marian (Ind.) coach Mark Henninger returns nine offensive starters from a team that ranked fifth nationally in scoring at 41.7 points per game. All-America wide receiver Krishawn Hogan led the country with 101 receptions and scored 31 total touchdowns (16 receiving, 15 rushing) in 2015, but Hayden Northern–the Knights' all-time leading passer–has graduated. Defensively, Marian returns five starters from a unit that allowed just 14.4 points per game and will be led by linebacker Shaquille Ash.

Dual-threat quarterback Tanner Trosin (2,841 passing yards, 866 rushing yards, 27 total touchdowns) returns to guide **Southern Oregon** in its quest for a third consecutive appearance in the NAIA national championship game. Trosin's favorite target, wideout Matt Retzlaff, has amassed 166 receptions, 2,403 yards and 31 touchdowns while earning All-Frontier Conference honors in each of his first three seasons. All-America defensive back Julius Rucker leads seven returning starters on defense.

Saint Francis (Ind.) should have another explosive offense with the return of quarterback Nick Ferrer (3,476 passing yards, 40 touchdowns), running back Justin Green (1,062 rushing yards, 10 TDs) and receiver Seth Coate (1,225 receiving yards, 18 TDs). Coach Kevin Donley also returns nine starters on defense.

Coach Mike Grossner returns 16 total starters from a **Baker (Kan.)** team that finished 11-2 in 2015. All-America wide receiver Clarence Clark will remain the focal point of the offense after snagging 68 receptions for 1,113 yards (16.4 yards per catch) and 16 touchdowns. Defensive back Darrian Winston (7 interceptions) leads the defense.

Morningside (Iowa) will rely on senior running back Tyler Kavan (1,313 rushing yards, 29 TDs) and junior wide receiver Connor Niles (83 receptions, 1,538 yards, 17 TDs) to carry the load offensively while sophomore Trent Solsma takes over the reins at quarterback for a team that broke its own NAIA record last season by averaging 58.9 points per game.

Quarterback John Rhode and wide receiver Stephen Simms comprise a prolific duo for 18th-year **Saint Xavier (Ill.)** coach Mike Feminis. Rhode passed for 3,038 yards and 24 TDs, while Simms ranked third in NAIA all-purpose yardage (1,976).

Grand View (Iowa) returns six starters from a defense that led the country in total yards (237.5 per game) and scoring (13.9 points per game). Quarterback Derek Fulton graduated, so the offense will lean on 5-7 tailback Jordan Cheatem, who rushed for 1,325 yards and 15 touchdowns last year.

Dakota Wesleyan (S.D.) coach Ross Cimpl enters his fifth season with a dynamic quarterback in Dillon Turner (2,366 passing yards, 889 rushing yards, 35 total touchdowns) and an explosive receiver in Hayden Adams (57 catches, 875 yards, 14 TDs).

All-America running back Nolan Saraceni, who led the NAIA in rushing with 1,683 yards in 2015, is among eight returning offensive starters at **Montana Tech**. Coach Chuck Morrell has guided the Orediggers to two Frontier Conference titles in five years.

Benedictine (Kan.) wide receiver Christian Haack (75 receptions, 1,157 yards, 9 TDs) will be the focal point for an offense that looks to increase on its 29.4-point scoring average from 2015.

HOGAN: WILLIE J. ALLEN JR. / AP

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Jake Fromm, QB, Warner Robins (Ga.) Houston County

Dawg days

Once again, our list of the top high school seniors is led by a Peach State quarterback who's already committed to play for the University of Georgia.

BY JC SHURBURTT
Sporting News Yearbooks correspondent

The annual *Sporting News* All-America Team features many of the top overall college prospects in the 2017 recruiting cycle from a wide variety of states.

Leading the way on this year's first team are four players each from the talent-producing states of California and Florida, followed by three from Texas. Those three states annually are the top trio in the country in terms of producing both college-bound talent and future NFL players from their rich high school ranks.

Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee are all represented with two first-team selections each. While North Carolina (and the Carolinas as a whole) annually produces its fair share of talent, this cycle in the Volunteer State is a bit of an outlier in terms of the number of elite prospects and is part of a larger upward trend in that state as far as national-level elite talent.

Interestingly, this is the second straight year our first-team quarterback (Jake Fromm from Warner Robins, Ga.) has committed to play for the Georgia Bulldogs. Last year it was Jacob Eason of Lake Stevens, Wash., who chose the Dawgs. It appears as if new UGA coach Kirby Smart is well-set at the QB position early on during his tenure in Athens.

This team is selected considering the players' projection as a college-level athlete and their production on the field this past season.

OFFENSE

QB JAKE FROMM

Warner Robins (Ga.) Houston County

Fromm is coming off an outstanding junior season. The U.S. Army All-American threw for 4,099 yards and 36 touchdowns, giving him 67 passing touchdowns during the last two seasons. The 6-2, 225-pound signal-caller was a longtime Alabama commit prior to flipping to in-state Georgia in the spring. The commitment gives the Bulldogs All-America quarterbacks in

FROMM: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

consecutive classes, as UGA signed and enrolled Jacob Eason from the 2016 cycle.

RB NAJEE HARRIS
Antioch (Calif.)

The 6-2, 220-pound Harris rushed for 2,744 yards and 36 touchdowns during his junior season and currently ranks as the No. 1 overall prospect for the Class of 2017 per 247Sports Composite rankings. Harris is an Alabama commit and has already drawn comparisons to Heisman Trophy-winning Tide running back Derrick Henry because of his size, speed and athleticism. He's as can't-miss of a running-back prospect as there is in this class.

RB CAM AKERS
Clinton (Miss.)

Akers has excellent size at 6-0 and 210 pounds, explosiveness and breakaway speed and is a difference-maker carrying the football. During his junior season, he rushed for 1,418 yards and also threw for 2,331 (he plays quarterback on his high school team). Some have described Akers as a "once-in-a-lifetime" talent. Akers was committed to Alabama, but has since backed off that pledge. In-state Ole Miss, Georgia, Ohio State and others are in hot pursuit along with the Crimson Tide.

WR DONOVAN PEOPLES-JONES
Detroit Cass Tech

Peoples-Jones is the latest big-time prospect to come out of Cass Tech in Detroit and the 6-2, 192-pounder was a first-team All-State pick as a junior, compiling 714 yards receiving on just 30 catches in 10 games. Peoples-Jones currently ranks as the No. 1 receiver prospect in the Class of 2017 per 247Sports Composite rankings and holds offers from Ohio State, Michigan, Georgia, Alabama, USC, Tennessee and a host of others.

WR NICO COLLINS
Pinson (Ala.) Clay-Chalkville

During his junior season, the 6-5, 195-pound Collins was amazingly productive, catching 60 passes for 1,103 yards and 16 touchdowns. While there are plenty of outstanding talents at wide receiver in the 2017 class, Collins may end up being the best. In-state programs Alabama and Auburn lead a lengthy offer list that also includes contenders Georgia, Clemson and Michigan.

TE COLBY PARKINSON
Thousand Oaks (Calif.) Oaks Christian

The 6-6, 225-pound Parkinson has caught 46 passes the past two seasons for one of the better high school programs in southern California. A two-sport athlete, Parkinson has excellent athletic upside and a bright future at tight end. He also currently is committed to a college program that is no stranger to producing top-flight talent at his position–Stanford.

Najee Harris, RB, Antioch (Calif.)

OL JOSH MYERS
Miamisburg (Ohio)

This 6-6, 290-pound All-American is currently ranked as the No. 1 prospect at offensive tackle nationally per 247Sports Composite rankings. When you watch Myers on film, it's serious business. He not only has what you want in an elite line prospect (feet, size, length), but he's a dominant and polished player at offensive tackle. Myers is committed to Ohio State. He comes from an athletic family, as his father played offensive tackle at Kentucky and older brother Zach currently plays for the Wildcats. His mother, Julie, played basketball at Dayton.

OL ISAIAH WILSON
Brooklyn (N.Y.) Poly Prep

While Myers is more college-ready, the 6-7, 322-pound Wilson may have more upside than any tackle prospect in the country, including Myers. An All-New York City pick, Wilson is one of the most coveted recruits to come out of the Big Apple in some time. Wilson listed a top five of Alabama, Ohio State, Georgia, Michigan and LSU in February, so most of the top college programs in the country agree. If you are looking for a potential leader in his recruitment, it may be the Wolverines. Wilson has been invited to the Under Armour All-America Game.

OL CALVIN ASHLEY
Orlando (Fla.) First Academy

Ashley is a 6-6, 305-pound prospect who has been outstanding on the gridiron and an elite-level talent during the majority of his high school career. Last season, at Orlando-area power Dr. Phillips, Ashley was a first-team Class 8A All-State selection. He committed early in the process to Auburn and remained firm on the Tigers as of press time. A U.S. Army All-American, Ashley is the No. 2 tackle prospect in the Class of 2017 per 247Sports Composite rankings.

OL TREY SMITH
Jackson (Tenn.) University School

The 6-5, 302-pound Smith is perhaps the best O-line prospect to come out of west Tennessee since Michael Oher in the 2005 cycle. Smith was an All-State selection as a junior and has invitations to both the U.S. Army All-American Bowl and Under Armour All-America Game. A slew of college programs has lined up for his services, including Tennessee, Ole Miss, Notre Dame and Alabama, among others.

ATH D'ANDRE SWIFT
Philadelphia St. Joseph's

The 5-9, 204-pound Swift has more than 1,500 all-purpose yards during the past two seasons and was an All-City selection as a junior. He will remind many of former Clemson and current New Orleans Saints running back C.J. Spiller in terms of build, raw speed and explosiveness. Penn State, Florida State, Clemson, Alabama and others are in the mix for the nation's top-ranked all-purpose prospect for 2017 per 247Sports Composite rankings.

DEFENSE

DL MARVIN WILSON
Bellaire (Texas) Episcopal

The 6-4, 316-pound Wilson is a disruptive monster in the interior of the defensive line. During the past two seasons combined, he has 34 tackles for loss and 19 sacks. The U.S. Army All-American is currently ranked as the No. 1 defensive tackle nationally per 247Sports Composite rankings and has scholarship offers from nearly every major program in the country. Currently, Texas, Texas A&M, LSU, Baylor, Florida State, Ohio State and Michigan are the teams to watch with regards to Wilson's recruitment.

DL TYLER SHELVIN
Lafayette (La.) Notre Dame

The 6-3, 329-pound Shelvin has been outstanding on the gridiron since his

HARRIS: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

Dylan Moses, LB, Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

freshman year of high school when he earned the starting job for Northside High (he transferred to Notre Dame this offseason). Shelvin is an outstanding blend of athleticism and power and will fit in nicely at LSU, where he is currently committed. Shelvin is the top-ranked overall prospect in the state of Louisiana for the 2017 class per 247Sports Composite rankings and was a first-team Class 4A All-State selection this past season.

DL JOSHUA KAINDOH
Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

Kaindoh, a 6-6, 256-pound jumbo athlete, had 48 total tackles and 3.5 sacks last season for a loaded IMG squad. Originally from Maryland, Kaindoh has been on the radar of multiple colleges (particularly in the Big Ten/Northeast) since early in his high school career. Penn State, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Florida State and Maryland all are considered serious early contenders for his services, with the Nittany Lions perhaps holding an edge.

DL JAELAN PHILLIPS
Redlands (Calif.) Redlands East Valley

Phillips was a monster on the field during his junior season, piling up 87 total tackles and 13.5 sacks. The 6-5, 235-pound U.S. Army All-American is one of the most coveted prospects on the West Coast for the Class of 2017 and, early on, Stanford, USC and UCLA are considered the front-runners in his recruitment. Phillips has excellent quickness and athleticism for a player his size and could be the nation's top prospect at defensive end when all is said and done.

LB DYLAN MOSES
Bradenton (Fla.) IMG Academy

Moses had 105 tackles last season at University High in Baton Rouge, La., and will compete this year at IMG. The 6-2, 220-pounder has elite ability to cover ground laterally at the linebacker position and also has had an outstanding career as a running back at the prep level. Moses is currently ranked as the No. 2 overall prospect in the 2017 recruiting cycle. He was committed to hometown LSU for years before backing off the pledge to the Tigers, who will have to hold off a strong charge from Texas and others.

LB BARON BROWNING
Kennedale (Texas)

Browning is a big, fast and physical linebacker out of the Lone Star State who is about as can't-miss as it gets. During his junior season, Browning had 74 tackles, including eight for loss and forced four fumbles. The 6-3, 230-pounder has offers from all over the country, but four Texas programs–Texas, Texas A&M, Baylor and TCU–have the early buzz regarding his recruitment.

LB JUSTIN FOSTER
Shelby (N.C.) Crest

The 6-3, 245-pound Foster is a U.S. Army All-American who hails from the same high school that produced former Florida linebacker Brandon Spikes as well as former Gators defensive end Jonathan Bullard. Teams run away from Foster, yet he still had 57 tackles last season, including seven for loss. Clemson, Tennessee and North Carolina are the teams to watch for the Tar Heel State's top overall prospect in the Class of 2017.

DB DARNAY HOLMES
Calabasas (Calif.)

Holmes is one of the top athletes

Baron Browning, LB, Kennedale (Texas)

MOSES, BROWNING: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

DeAngelo Gibbs, DB
Loganville (Ga.) Grayson

on the West Coast for the 2017 recruiting cycle and is currently ranked as the No. 1 overall cornerback prospect nationally for the cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings. During an outstanding high school career on both sides of the ball, the 5-10, 190-pound Holmes has amassed 102 total tackles and 25 pass breakups. Stanford, UCLA, Nebraska and Arizona are among the programs in the mix for his services.

DB JEFFREY OKUDAH
Grand Prairie (Texas) South Grand Prairie

The 6-2, 194-pound Okudah is a versatile playmaker in the secondary for one of the better high school programs in the Lone Star State. He is currently ranked as the nation's No. 1 safety prospect for the 2017 cycle per the 247Sports Composite rankings and was an All-District selection this past season. Most of the nation's top programs have offered and Ohio State, Alabama, Stanford, Texas, Baylor and Texas A&M are considered the early favorites to land him.

DB DEANGELO GIBBS
Loganville (Ga.) Grayson

Gibbs is one of those rare cornerback prospects with elite size. The 6-2, 204-pounder is built like a safety or linebacker, but has the hips and coverage ability to have an outstanding future in college at cornerback. Gibbs was an All-State selection in Georgia's largest classification this past season and has scholarship offers from most of the top programs in the country. Georgia and Tennessee are the early schools to watch regarding his recruitment.

DB SHAUN WADE
Jacksonville (Fla.)
Trinity Christian Academy

Wade, an Ohio State commit, is a 6-1, 177-pound cornerback who has the size, length, hips, athleticism and speed to be an elite playmaker. During his high school career, he is approaching the 75-tackle mark, has 20 pass break-ups and has blocked a punt. Wade is also an outstanding basketball player and can fill up a highlight reel in that sport as well at the prep level. Wade has been committed to the Buckeyes since January 2015, but that hasn't stopped LSU, Florida, Alabama, Florida State and others from trying to flip him.

ATH JACOBY STEVENS
Murfreesboro (Tenn.) Oakland

The 6-2, 200-pound Stevens plays all over the field but projects as a safety over the long term. An All-State selection this past season, Stevens has excellent ball skills and is an assassin in the run game. Stevens was committed to LSU at one point, but backed off in December. The Tigers, along with Georgia, Tennessee and a host of others remain in the mix to land him. Though Stevens lives in the Volunteer State, both of his parents reside in Louisiana.

K BRAYAN DIAZ
Monroe (N.C.)

The 5-8, 195-pound Diaz went 14-of-17 last season on field goals and had a long of 47 yards.

P ADAM STACK
Honolulu Kamehameha

The 6-2, 175-pound Stack averaged 46.5 yards per punt and downed 15 of 20 attempts inside the 20-yard line during his junior season. He's also an outstanding placekicker. Miami, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Alabama and others are showing interest.

SECOND TEAM

QUARTERBACK
- **Jake Bentley,** 6-4/219 pounds, Opelika (Ala.) *Committed to South Carolina*

RUNNING BACKS
- **Stephen Carr,** 6-0/202, Fontana (Calif.) Summit *Committed to USC*
- **Cordarrian Richardson,** 5-11/220, Memphis Trezevant *Committed to Clemson*

WIDE RECEIVERS
- **Tee Higgins,** 6-5/190, Oak Ridge (Tenn.)
- **Jeff Thomas,** 5-10/170, East St. Louis (Ill.)

TIGHT END
- **Brock Wright,** 6-5/243, Cypress (Texas) Cy-Fair *Committed to Notre Dame*

OFFENSIVE LINEMEN
- **Foster Sarell,** 6-6/320, Graham (Wash.) Kapowsin
- **Austin Jackson,** 6-5/260, Phoenix North Canyon
- **Wyatt Davis,** 6-5/310, Bellflower (Calif.) St. John Bosco
- **Tyrese Robinson,** 6-4/310, McKinney (Texas) Boyd *Committed to Oklahoma*
- **Brett Neilon,** 6-2/280, Rancho Santa Margarita (Calif.) Santa Margarita Catholic

DEFENSIVE LINEMEN
- **Jay Tufele,** 6-3/284, South Jordan (Utah) Bingham
- **Jarez Parks,** 6-5/255, Sebastian (Fla.) Sebastian River
- **A.J. Epenesa,** 6-5/230, Edwardsville (Ill.) *Committed to Iowa*
- **Haskell Garrett,** 6-2/298, Las Vegas Bishop Gorman *Committed to Ohio State*

LINEBACKERS
- **Nate McBride,** 6-2/220, Vidalia (Ga.) Comprehensive
- **Drew Singleton,** 6-2/215, Paramus (N.J.) Catholic
- **Markail Benton,** 6-2/237, Phenix City (Ala.) Central
- **Christopher Allen,** 6-4/222, Baton Rouge (La.) Southern University Lab

DEFENSIVE BACKS
- **Stanford Samuels,** 6-2/175, Hollywood (Fla.) Flanagan
- **Lamont Wade,** 5-9/185, Clairton (Pa.)
- **Thomas Graham,** 5-11/170, Rancho Cucamonga (Calif.) *Committed to USC*
- **Jamyest Williams,** 5-9/170, Lawrenceville (Ga.) Archer

ATHLETES
- **Tate Martell,** 5-11/203, Las Vegas Bishop Gorman
- **Devon Hunter,** 6-3/210, Chesapeake (Va.) Indian River

KICKER
- **Blake Haubeil,** 6-3/200, Buffalo (N.Y.) Canisius *Committed to Ohio State*

PUNTER
- **Manny Berz, 5-9/180,** Perris (Calif.) Citrus Hill

GIBBS: PHOTO COURTESY OF 247SPORTS

D1S

2015 DIVISION 1 STANDINGS

FBS

AMERICAN ATHLETIC

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Temple	7	1	278	165	10	4	417	281
South Florida	6	2	275	157	8	5	437	298
Cincinnati	4	4	286	259	7	6	440	405
Connecticut	4	4	152	166	6	7	223	253
East Carolina	3	5	204	188	5	7	329	312
UCF	0	8	117	359	0	12	167	452
WEST								
Houston	7	1	325	184	13	1	566	290
Navy	7	1	308	177	11	2	478	284
Memphis	5	3	313	229	9	4	522	355
Tulsa	3	5	272	322	6	7	483	518
SMU	1	7	199	375	2	10	333	548
Tulane	1	7	147	295	3	9	236	435

ACC

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
ATLANTIC								
Clemson	8	0	304	152	14	1	577	325
Florida State	6	2	216	144	10	3	412	227
Louisville	5	3	208	200	8	5	373	313
N.C. State	3	5	219	237	7	6	432	336
Syracuse	2	6	202	266	4	8	327	372
Wake Forest	1	7	120	219	3	9	209	295
Boston College	0	8	73	147	3	9	206	183
COASTAL								
North Carolina	8	0	340	190	11	3	570	343
Pittsburgh	6	2	216	182	8	5	367	339
Miami (Fla.)	5	3	199	259	8	5	361	366
Duke	4	4	220	260	8	5	410	330
Virginia Tech	4	4	203	186	7	6	403	342
Virginia	3	5	217	233	4	8	309	386
Georgia Tech	1	7	188	250	3	9	351	309

BIG TEN

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Michigan State	7	1	268	170	12	2	417	304
Ohio State	7	1	282	119	12	1	464	196
Michigan	6	2	256	168	10	3	408	213
Penn State	4	4	190	184	7	6	301	284
Indiana	2	6	281	317	6	7	475	489
Maryland	1	7	178	282	3	9	296	413
Rutgers	1	7	170	334	4	8	325	419
WEST								
Iowa	8	0	253	153	12	2	433	285
Northwestern	6	2	148	162	10	3	254	242
Wisconsin	6	2	194	119	10	3	348	178
Nebraska	3	5	245	227	6	7	427	362
Minnesota	2	6	194	239	6	7	292	327
Illinois	2	6	135	203	5	7	272	279
Purdue	1	7	180	297	2	10	301	438

BIG 12

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Oklahoma	8	1	425	184	11	2	566	286
Oklahoma State	7	2	369	313	10	3	514	396
TCU	7	2	351	252	11	2	547	354
Baylor	6	3	384	261	10	3	625	368
West Virginia	4	5	269	255	8	5	442	320
Texas Tech	4	5	396	422	7	6	586	567
Texas	4	5	228	253	5	7	317	364
Kansas State	3	6	263	328	6	7	389	409
Iowa State	2	7	229	324	3	9	300	392
Kansas	0	9	108	430	0	12	183	553

CONFERENCE USA

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Western Kentucky	8	0	405	188	12	2	620	363
Middle Tennessee	6	2	293	206	7	6	442	346
Marshall	6	2	259	133	10	3	407	231
Florida Atlantic	3	5	177	201	3	9	270	345
Florida Intl.	3	5	216	270	5	7	306	358
Old Dominion	3	5	215	298	5	7	291	429
Charlotte	0	8	140	310	2	10	210	435
WEST								
Southern Miss	7	1	348	143	9	5	559	358
Louisiana Tech	6	2	283	208	9	4	488	349
UTSA	3	5	191	231	3	9	271	405
UTEP	3	5	138	214	5	7	248	395
Rice	3	5	174	271	5	7	313	430
North Texas	1	7	146	312	1	11	182	495

MID-AMERICAN

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Bowling Green	7	1	376	175	10	4	591	405
Ohio	5	3	204	219	8	5	358	329
Akron	5	3	191	170	8	5	311	279
Buffalo	3	5	201	251	5	7	320	331
Kent State	2	6	73	202	3	9	157	313
Miami (Ohio)	2	6	142	226	3	9	215	384
Massachusetts	2	6	178	228	3	9	266	377
WEST								
Northern Illinois	6	2	293	205	8	6	436	387
Western Michigan	6	2	318	199	8	5	468	368
Toledo	6	2	305	190	10	2	420	249
Central Michigan	6	2	241	171	7	6	336	286
Ball State	2	6	168	283	3	9	277	430
Eastern Michigan	0	8	165	336	1	11	305	505

MOUNTAIN WEST

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
MOUNTAIN								
Air Force	6	2	298	197	8	6	473	357
New Mexico	5	3	217	221	7	6	389	369
Utah State	5	3	285	209	6	7	377	347
Boise State	5	3	305	194	9	4	508	263
Colorado State	5	3	220	232	7	6	385	354
Wyoming	2	6	159	274	2	10	228	408
WEST								
San Diego State	8	0	289	90	11	3	450	230
Nevada	4	4	211	200	7	6	341	349
San Jose State	4	4	235	238	6	7	363	354
Fresno State	2	6	178	274	3	9	267	457
UNLV	2	6	223	293	3	9	343	404
Hawaii	0	8	126	324	3	10	229	463

PAC-12

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
NORTH								
Stanford	8	1	368	219	12	2	529	316
Oregon	7	2	368	340	9	4	559	488
Washington State	6	3	304	274	9	4	409	360
California	4	5	285	298	8	5	493	399
Washington	4	5	261	180	7	6	398	244
Oregon State	0	9	160	381	2	10	228	444
SOUTH								
USC	6	3	287	240	8	6	475	360
Utah	6	3	270	207	10	3	398	290
UCLA	5	4	295	259	8	5	419	338
Arizona State	4	5	322	323	6	7	450	435
Arizona	3	6	278	363	7	6	486	465
Colorado	1	8	177	291	4	9	320	357

SEC

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Florida	7	1	189	108	10	4	325	256
Tennessee	5	3	250	183	9	4	457	260
Georgia	5	3	183	159	10	3	342	220
Vanderbilt	2	6	106	184	4	8	182	252
Kentucky	2	6	140	221	5	7	296	329
Missouri	1	7	73	149	5	7	163	194
South Carolina	1	7	161	243	3	9	263	330
WEST								
Alabama	7	1	252	139	14	1	526	227
Ole Miss	6	2	258	210	10	3	531	294
Arkansas	5	3	275	241	8	5	467	356
LSU	5	3	212	198	9	3	394	291
Texas A&M	4	4	161	175	8	5	361	286
Mississippi State	4	4	210	208	9	4	447	302
Auburn	2	6	177	229	7	6	357	338

SUN BELT

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Arkansas State	8	0	389	220	9	4	520	393
Appalachian State	7	1	307	165	11	2	477	248
Georgia Southern	6	2	308	182	9	4	474	306
Georgia State	5	3	222	197	6	7	350	368
South Alabama	3	5	211	286	5	7	300	447
New Mexico State	3	5	251	339	3	9	343	540
Troy	3	5	250	201	4	8	335	339
Idaho	3	5	252	307	4	8	364	505
Louisiana	3	5	212	247	4	8	317	382
Texas State	2	6	180	272	3	9	323	470
Louisiana-Monroe	1	7	162	328	2	11	273	475

FCS

BIG SKY

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Southern Utah	7	1	312	134	8	4	425	250
Portland State	6	2	273	215	9	3	411	268
Montana	6	2	273	180	8	5	381	320
Northern Arizona	5	3	344	273	7	4	432	383
Eastern Washington	5	3	249	286	6	5	381	435
Weber State	5	3	194	189	6	5	247	270
North Dakota	5	3	255	218	7	4	309	283
Montana State	3	5	303	301	5	6	461	377
Northern Colorado	3	5	214	298	6	5	330	378
Cal Poly	3	5	311	302	4	7	372	390
UC Davis	2	6	184	271	2	9	245	376
Sacramento State	1	7	161	267	2	9	216	368
Idaho State	1	7	179	318	2	9	242	450

BIG SOUTH

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Charleston South.	6	0	173	77	10	3	330	224
Coastal Carolina	4	2	184	107	9	3	421	241
Monmouth	3	3	104	125	5	6	226	277
Liberty	3	3	151	154	6	5	285	296
Kennesaw State	2	4	103	152	6	5	318	233
Gardner-Webb	2	4	64	145	4	7	141	227
Presbyterian	1	5	77	96	2	9	138	223

COLONIAL

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Richmond	6	2	274	183	10	4	462	344
William & Mary	6	2	234	149	9	4	402	295
James Madison	6	2	334	231	9	3	531	344
Towson	5	3	176	162	7	4	260	242
Villanova	5	3	189	151	6	5	231	202
New Hampshire	5	3	171	172	7	5	287	264
Delaware	3	5	117	155	4	7	164	225
Elon	3	5	116	205	4	7	147	273
Maine	3	5	144	154	3	8	164	237
Stony Brook	3	5	121	139	5	5	173	157
Albany	2	6	134	213	3	8	165	315
Rhode Island	1	7	104	200	1	10	151	329

IVY LEAGUE

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Dartmouth	6	1	174	77	9	1	288	101
Harvard	6	1	236	120	9	1	364	130
Pennsylvania	6	1	239	165	7	3	329	268
Yale	3	4	158	192	6	4	235	242
Brown	3	4	197	254	5	5	279	329
Princeton	2	5	156	184	5	5	292	237
Cornell	1	6	101	219	1	9	142	297
Columbia	1	6	77	127	2	8	143	198

MEAC

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
North Carolina A&T	7	1	241	105	10	2	371	206
N.C. Central	7	1	241	139	8	3	327	233
Bethune-Cookman	7	1	282	174	9	2	345	275
South Carolina State	6	2	242	102	7	4	294	167
Hampton	5	3	218	142	6	5	288	233
Norfolk State	4	4	154	180	4	7	184	312
Morgan State	4	4	161	124	4	6	182	254
Delaware State	1	7	102	272	1	10	158	380
Florida A&M	1	7	123	230	1	10	161	369
Howard	1	7	160	269	1	10	169	408
Savannah State	1	7	132	319	1	9	154	436

MISSOURI VALLEY

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
North Dakota State	7	1	284	133	13	2	524	230
Illinois State	7	1	273	142	10	2	424	237
Western Illinois	5	3	224	260	7	6	327	386
Northern Iowa	5	3	239	131	9	4	400	251
South Dakota State	5	3	194	126	8	4	341	208
Indiana State	3	5	210	263	5	6	305	346
Youngstown State	3	5	217	192	5	6	323	254
South Dakota	3	5	152	229	5	6	231	280
Southern Illinois	2	6	292	293	3	8	397	381
Missouri State	0	8	73	389	1	10	108	535

NORTHEAST

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Duquesne	5	1	166	106	8	4	368	231
St. Francis (Pa.)	4	2	153	97	6	4	282	209
Central Connecticut	3	3	125	120	4	7	190	283
Sacred Heart	3	3	137	139	6	5	301	250
Bryant	3	3	176	135	5	6	297	250
Robert Morris	2	4	50	123	4	7	154	238
Wagner	1	5	92	179	1	10	157	397

OHIO VALLEY

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Jacksonville State	8	0	321	125	13	2	584	299
Eastern Illinois	7	1	230	158	7	5	283	319
Tennessee-Martin	6	2	287	221	7	4	390	370
Eastern Kentucky	5	3	254	192	6	5	333	271
SE Missouri State	3	4	200	186	4	7	279	299
Tennessee Tech	3	5	187	287	4	7	254	395
Murray State	2	6	238	288	3	8	336	409
Tennessee State	1	6	157	228	4	6	246	281
Austin Peay	0	8	113	302	0	11	133	429

PATRIOT LEAGUE

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Colgate	6	0	170	127	9	4	335	353
Fordham	5	1	232	168	9	3	442	367
Lehigh	4	2	238	219	6	5	355	388
Holy Cross	3	3	203	143	6	5	351	249
Georgetown	2	4	134	149	4	7	222	296
Bucknell	1	5	87	123	4	7	172	206
Lafayette	0	6	92	227	1	10	150	386

PIONEER FOOTBALL LEAGUE

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Dayton	7	1	207	141	10	2	296	229
San Diego	7	1	248	126	9	2	341	198
Jacksonville	6	2	249	154	9	2	335	210
Morehead State	6	2	234	179	7	4	309	278
Butler	4	4	211	189	6	5	310	265
Drake	4	4	192	160	5	6	254	263
Marist	4	4	209	146	5	6	250	224
Campbell	3	5	181	149	5	6	270	195
Stetson	1	7	121	255	3	8	237	346
Valparaiso	1	7	146	324	2	9	245	432
Davidson	1	7	103	278	2	9	138	389

SOUTHERN

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Chattanooga	6	1	201	121	9	4	384	291
The Citadel	6	1	228	128	9	4	400	283
Western Carolina	5	2	199	173	7	4	301	304
Samford	3	4	232	212	6	5	381	294
Wofford	3	4	186	201	5	6	284	305
Mercer	2	5	159	188	5	6	318	238
Furman	2	5	122	220	4	7	193	318
VMI	1	6	143	227	2	9	254	385

SOUTHLAND

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
McNeese State	9	0	266	111	10	1	332	145
Sam Houston State	7	2	399	187	11	4	616	421
Central Arkansas	7	2	286	200	7	4	310	277
Incarnate Word	5	4	191	251	6	5	226	294
Lamar	4	5	297	265	5	6	394	334
Northwestern State	4	5	277	329	4	7	307	435
Stephen F. Austin	4	5	281	258	4	7	316	362
SE Louisiana	3	6	179	188	4	7	221	237
Abilene Christian	3	6	223	284	3	8	272	358
Nicholls State	3	6	195	262	3	8	192	357
Houston Baptist	0	8	96	355	2	9	222	396

SWAC

	CONF W	CONF L	CONF PF	CONF PA	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
EAST								
Alcorn State	7	2	386	157	9	4	515	295
Alabama State	5	4	240	242	6	5	280	273
Alabama A&M	3	6	221	277	3	8	231	384
Jackson State	3	6	213	273	3	8	252	378
Miss. Valley State	1	8	142	371	1	10	149	486
WEST								
Grambling State	9	0	408	222	9	3	496	400
Prairie View A&M	8	1	425	268	8	2	449	331
Southern	6	3	360	259	6	5	381	369
Texas Southern	2	7	193	338	3	7	256	338
Arkansas-Pine Bluff	1	8	179	360	2	9	215	422

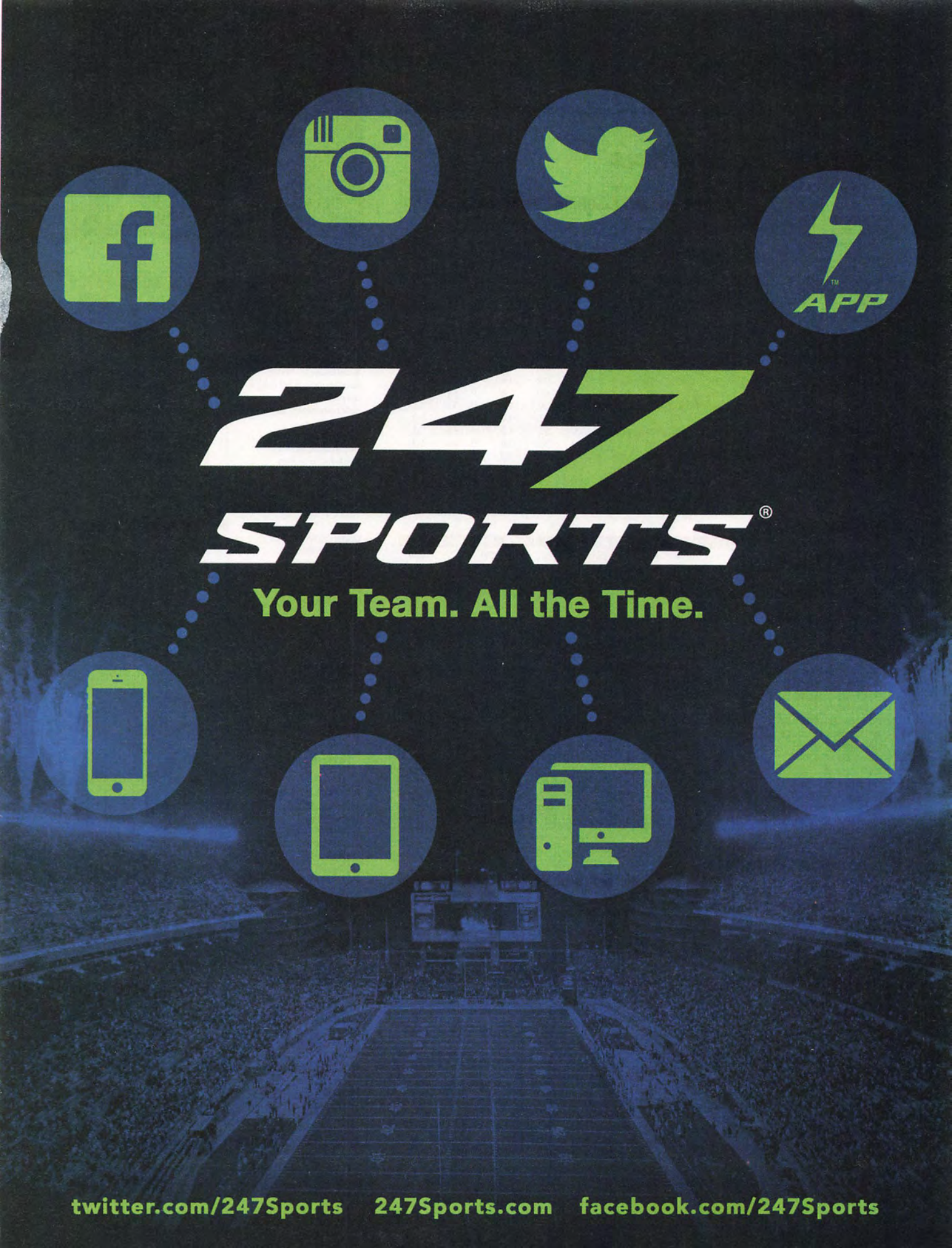
INDEPENDENTS

FBS

	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
Notre Dame	10	3	445	313
BYU	9	4	438	297
Army	2	10	248	313

FCS

	OVR W	OVR L	OVR PF	OVR PA
East Tenn. State	2	9	180	416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STATS

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INDIVIDUAL LEADERS

PASSING EFFICIENCY *(MINIMUM OF 15 ATTEMPTS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	ATT	CMP	PCT	INT	INT%	YDS	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	RATING
Vernon Adams Jr., Oregon	SR	10	259	168	64.9	6	2.3	2643	10.20	26	10.0	179.1
Brandon Doughty, Western Kentucky	SR	14	540	388	71.9	9	1.7	5055	9.36	48	8.9	176.5
Baker Mayfield, Oklahoma	JR	13	395	269	68.1	7	1.8	3700	9.37	36	9.1	173.3
Kevin Hogan, Stanford	SR	14	304	206	67.8	8	2.6	2867	9.43	27	8.9	171.0
Brandon Allen, Arkansas	SR	13	370	244	65.9	8	2.2	3440	9.30	30	8.1	166.5
Matt Johnson, Bowling Green	SR	14	569	383	67.3	8	1.4	4946	8.69	46	8.1	164.2
Zach Terrell, Western Michigan	JR	13	391	262	67.0	9	2.3	3510	9.02	29	7.4	162.3
Trevone Boykin, TCU	SR	11	396	257	64.9	10	2.5	3575	9.03	31	7.8	161.5
Jared Goff, California	JR	13	529	341	64.5	13	2.5	4719	8.92	43	8.1	161.3
Taylor Lamb, Appalachian State	SO	13	283	170	60.1	9	3.2	2387	8.43	31	11.0	160.7
Paxton Lynch, Memphis	JR	13	443	296	66.8	4	0.9	3776	8.52	28	6.3	157.5
Deshaun Watson, Clemson	SO	15	491	333	67.8	13	2.6	4104	8.36	35	7.1	156.3
Chad Kelly, Ole Miss	JR	13	458	298	65.1	13	2.8	4042	8.83	31	6.8	155.9
Nick Mullens, Southern Miss	JR	14	521	331	63.5	12	2.3	4476	8.59	38	7.3	155.2
Jeff Driskel, Louisiana Tech	SR	13	450	281	62.4	8	1.8	4033	8.96	27	6.0	154.0
Nick Arbuckle, Georgia State	SR	13	486	307	63.2	12	2.5	4368	8.99	28	5.8	152.7
Brent Stockstill, Middle Tennessee	FR	13	490	327	66.7	9	1.8	4005	8.17	30	6.1	151.9
Gunner Kiel, Cincinnati	JR	10	316	206	65.2	11	3.5	2777	8.79	19	6.0	151.9
Cody Kessler, USC	SR	14	446	298	66.8	7	1.6	3536	7.93	29	6.5	151.7
Dane Evans, Tulsa	JR	13	485	305	62.9	8	1.6	4332	8.93	25	5.2	151.6
Nate Sudfeld, Indiana	SR	12	412	247	60.0	7	1.7	3573	8.67	27	6.6	151.0
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State	SR	13	477	316	66.2	5	1.0	3793	7.95	29	6.1	151.0

TOTAL OFFENSE

			RUSHING				PASSING					
	YEAR	G	CAR	GAIN	LOSS	NET	ATT	YDS	PLAYS	YDS	YDS/PLAY	YDS/G
Patrick Mahomes, Texas Tech	SO	13	131	624	168	456	573	4653	704	5109	7.25	393.0
Trevone Boykin, TCU	SR	11	123	695	83	612	396	3575	519	4187	8.06	380.6
Luke Falk, Washington State	SO	12	82	189	304	-115	645	4566	727	4451	6.12	370.9
Matt Johnson, Bowling Green	SR	14	113	408	249	159	569	4946	682	5105	7.48	364.6
Jared Goff, California	JR	13	56	207	215	-8	529	4719	585	4711	8.05	362.4
Brandon Doughty, Western Kentucky	SR	14	27	29	151	-122	540	5055	567	4933	8.70	352.4
Chad Kelly, Ole Miss	JR	13	107	663	163	500	458	4042	565	4542	8.03	349.4
Deshaun Watson, Clemson	SO	15	207	1219	114	1105	491	4104	698	5209	7.46	347.3
Dak Prescott, Mississippi State	SR	13	160	790	202	588	477	3793	637	4381	6.87	337.0
Jeff Driskel, Louisiana Tech	SR	13	92	465	142	323	450	4033	542	4356	8.03	335.1
Dane Evans, Tulsa	JR	13	96	264	273	-9	485	4332	581	4323	7.44	332.5
Nick Arbuckle, Georgia State	SR	13	61	116	211	-95	486	4368	547	4273	7.81	328.7
Baker Mayfield, Oklahoma	JR	13	141	634	229	405	395	3700	536	4105	7.65	315.8
Nick Mullens, Southern Miss	JR	14	43	108	200	-92	521	4476	564	4384	7.77	313.1
Brent Stockstill, Middle Tennessee	FR	13	60	215	178	37	490	4005	550	4042	7.34	310.9
Paxton Lynch, Memphis	JR	13	87	359	120	239	443	3776	530	4015	7.57	308.8
Mike Bercovici, Arizona State	SR	13	109	347	263	84	532	3860	641	3944	6.15	303.4
Nate Sudfeld, Indiana	SR	12	46	155	94	61	412	3573	458	3634	7.93	302.8
Cooper Rush, Central Michigan	JR	13	63	267	219	48	489	3848	552	3896	7.05	299.7
Brett Rypien, Boise State	FR	11	40	63	135	-72	430	3353	470	3281	6.98	298.3
Matt Linehan, Idaho	SO	11	91	410	176	234	391	2992	482	3226	6.69	293.3
Mason Rudolph, Oklahoma State	SO	13	67	184	219	-35	424	3770	491	3735	7.60	287.3

ALL-PURPOSE YARDAGE

	YEAR	G	RUSH	REC	PR	KR	INT RET	MISC	YDS	YDS/G
Christian McCaffrey, Stanford	SO	14	2019	645	130	1070	0	0	3864	276.00
Tyler Ervin, San Jose State	SR	13	1601	334	105	597	0	0	2637	202.85
Leonard Fournette, LSU	SO	12	1953	253	0	0	0	0	2206	183.83
Jakeem Grant, Texas Tech	SR	13	68	1268	0	1017	0	0	2353	181.00
Royce Freeman, Oregon	SO	13	1836	348	0	0	0	0	2184	168.00
Dalvin Cook, Florida State	SO	12	1691	244	0	0	0	0	1935	161.25
Larry Rose III, New Mexico State	SO	12	1651	283	0	0	0	0	1934	161.17
Devontae Booker, Utah	SR	10	1261	318	0	0	0	0	1579	157.90
Jeremy McNichols, Boise State	SO	12	1337	460	0	89	0	0	1886	157.17
Ezekiel Elliott, Ohio State	JR	13	1821	206	13	0	0	0	2040	156.92
Derrick Henry, Alabama	JR	15	2219	91	0	0	0	0	2310	154.00
Donnel Pumphrey, San Diego State	JR	14	1653	416	0	0	0	0	2069	147.79
Brian Hill, Wyoming	SO	12	1631	132	0	0	0	0	1763	146.92
DeAndre Washington, Texas Tech	SR	13	1492	385	0	0	0	0	1877	144.38
Kenneth Dixon, Louisiana Tech	SR	11	1070	467	0	0	0	0	1537	139.73
Christian Kirk, Texas A&M	FR	13	54	1009	341	385	0	0	1789	137.62
Alex Collins, Arkansas	JR	13	1577	95	0	74	0	0	1746	134.31
Ito Smith, Southern Miss	SO	14	1128	515	0	233	0	0	1876	134.00
Tim White, Arizona State	JR	13	69	633	54	972	0	0	1728	132.92
Marcus Cox, Appalachian State	JR	12	1423	160	0	0	0	0	1583	131.92
Janarion Grant, Rutgers	JR	12	80	352	167	984	0	0	1583	131.92
Michael Thomas, Southern Miss	SR	13	0	1391	0	311	0	0	1702	130.92

Patrick Mahomes, Texas Tech: 393 yards/game total offense

RECEIVING YARDS

	YEAR	G	REC	YDS	TD	YDS/G
Keyarris Garrett, Tulsa	SR	13	96	1588	8	122.2
Roger Lewis, Bowling Green	SO	14	85	1544	16	110.3
Taywan Taylor, Western Kentucky	JR	14	86	1467	17	104.8
JuJu Smith-Schuster, USC	SO	14	89	1454	10	103.9
Corey Davis, Western Michigan	JR	13	90	1436	12	110.5
Thomas Sperbeck, Boise State	JR	13	88	1412	8	108.6
Michael Thomas, Southern Miss	SR	13	71	1391	14	107.0
Daniel Braverman, Western Michigan	JR	13	109	1377	13	105.9
Corey Coleman, Baylor	JR	12	74	1363	20	113.6
Richie James, Middle Tennessee	FR	13	108	1346	8	103.5
Josh Doctson, TCU	SR	11	79	1327	14	120.6
Tajae Sharpe, Massachusetts	SR	12	111	1319	5	109.9
Sterling Shepard, Oklahoma	SR	13	86	1288	11	99.1
Trent Taylor, Louisiana Tech	JR	13	99	1282	9	98.6
Jakeem Grant, Texas Tech	SR	13	90	1268	10	97.5

INTERCEPTIONS

	YEAR	G	INT	YDS	TD	INT/G
Shawun Lurry, Northern Illinois	SO	14	9	273	1	0.6
Zack Sanchez, Oklahoma	JR	11	7	60	1	0.6
Jamar Summers, Connecticut	SO	13	8	102	1	0.6
Dameon Baber, Nevada	FR	10	6	0	0	0.6
Damontae Kazee, San Diego State	JR	14	8	58	1	0.6
Desmond King, Iowa	JR	14	8	118	1	0.6
Latrell Gibbs, Appalachian State	SO	13	7	149	2	0.5
Demetrius Monday, Kent State	SO	12	6	108	1	0.5
Kai Nacua, BYU	JR	12	6	137	2	0.5
Kareem Orr, Arizona State	FR	12	6	98	1	0.5
Daryl Worley, West Virginia	JR	12	6	0	0	0.5
Artie Burns, Miami (Fla.)	JR	13	6	34	0	0.5
Antonio Glover, Georgia Southern	SR	13	6	51	0	0.5
Rocky Hayes, Arkansas State	SR	13	6	1	0	0.5
Tanner McEvoy, Wisconsin	SR	13	6	83	0	0.5
Dominick Sanders, Georgia	SO	13	6	205	1	0.5

SCORING

	YEAR	G	TD	XP	FG	PTS	PTS/G
Kenneth Dixon, Louisiana Tech	SR	11	26	0	0	156	14.2
Jeremy McNichols, Boise State	SO	12	26	0	0	156	13.0
Leonard Fournette, LSU	SO	12	23	0	0	138	11.5
Derrick Henry, Alabama	JR	15	28	0	0	168	11.2
Keenan Reynolds, Navy	SR	13	24	0	0	144	11.1
Ezekiel Elliott, Ohio State	JR	13	23	0	0	138	10.6
Tyler Rausa, Boise State	JR	13	0	59	25	134	10.3
Aidan Schneider, Oregon	SO	13	0	67	22	133	10.2
Jake Elliott, Memphis	JR	13	0	63	23	132	10.2
Corey Coleman, Baylor	JR	12	20	0	0	120	10.0
Dalvin Cook, Florida State	SO	12	20	0	0	120	10.0
Zane Gonzalez, Arizona State	JR	13	0	52	26	130	10.0
Zack Langer, Tulsa	SR	11	18	0	0	108	9.8

RUSHING

	YEAR	G	CAR	YDS	TD	AVG	YDS/G
Leonard Fournette, LSU	SO	12	300	1953	22	6.5	162.8
Derrick Henry, Alabama	JR	15	395	2219	28	5.6	147.9
Christian McCaffrey, Stanford	SO	14	337	2019	8	6.0	144.2
Royce Freeman, Oregon	SO	13	283	1836	17	6.5	141.2
Dalvin Cook, Florida State	SO	12	229	1691	19	7.4	140.9
Ezekiel Elliott, Ohio State	JR	13	289	1821	23	6.3	140.1
Larry Rose III, New Mexico State	SO	12	240	1651	14	6.9	139.6
Brian Hill, Wyoming	SO	12	281	1631	6	5.8	135.9
Devontae Booker, Utah	SR	10	268	1261	11	4.7	126.1
Matt Breida, Georgia Southern	JR	13	203	1608	17	7.9	123.7
Tyler Ervin, San Jose State	SR	13	294	1601	13	5.4	123.2
Alex Collins, Arkansas	JR	13	271	1577	20	5.8	121.3
Marcus Cox, Appalachian State	JR	12	243	1423	9	5.9	118.6

MAHOMES: MICHAEL THOMAS / AP

SACKS

	YEAR	G	SOLO	AST	YDS	TOTAL	SACKS/G
Carl Nassib, Penn State	SR	13	15	1	107	15.5	1.19
Trey Hendrickson, Florida Atlantic	JR	12	11	5	82	13.5	1.13
Yannick Ngakoue, Maryland	JR	12	11	5	77	13.5	1.13
Emmanuel Ogbah, Oklahoma State	JR	13	10	6	62	13.0	1.00
Myles Garrett, Texas A&M	SO	13	12	1	71	12.5	0.96
Jatavis Brown, Akron	SR	13	10	4	90	12.0	0.92
Terence Waugh, Kent State	JR	10	7	4	54	9.0	0.90
Ejuan Price, Pittsburgh	SR	13	10	3	89	11.5	0.88
Devonte Fields, Louisville	JR	13	10	2	73	11.0	0.85
Antonio Longino, Arizona State	SR	13	10	2	60	11.0	0.85
Bronson Kaufusi, BYU	SR	13	9	4	71	11.0	0.85
Shaq Lawson, Clemson	JR	15	12	1	90	12.5	0.83
JT Jones, Miami (Ohio)	JR	12	9	2	59	10.0	0.83
Mike Rose, N.C. State	SR	13	10	1	56	10.5	0.81
DeForest Buckner, Oregon	SR	13	9	3	74	10.5	0.81
DeMarcus Walker, Florida State	JR	13	8	5	58	10.5	0.81
Jonathan Allen, Alabama	JR	15	12	0	88	12.0	0.80

PUNT RETURNS *(MINIMUM OF 1.2 RETURNS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	NO.	YDS	TDs	YDS/RET
Cameron Sutton, Tennessee	JR	13	25	467	2	18.7
Brisly Estime, Syracuse	JR	11	15	272	2	18.1
William Likely, Maryland	JR	11	23	408	2	17.7
Dante Pettis, Washington	SO	13	16	271	2	16.9
Antonio Callaway, Florida	FR	14	28	435	2	15.5
Derek Keaton, Georgia Southern	SR	13	18	276	0	15.3
Desmond King, Iowa	JR	14	17	241	0	14.2
Teddy Ruben, Troy	SR	12	16	221	1	13.8
Ryan Switzer, North Carolina	JR	14	22	302	2	13.7
Jalin Marshall, Ohio State	SO	12	28	379	0	13.5
Blaise Taylor, Arkansas State	SO	11	24	322	1	13.4
Bra'Lon Cherry, N.C. State	JR	13	27	358	1	13.3

PUNTING *(MINIMUM OF 3.6 PUNTS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	P	YDS	AVG
Dalton Schomp, Florida Atlantic	JR	12	45	2160	48.0
Tom Hackett, Utah	SR	13	61	2925	48.0
Michael Carrizosa, San Jose State	SO	13	48	2280	47.5
Drew Kaser, Texas A&M	SR	12	60	2848	47.5
Hayden Hunt, Colorado State	JR	12	52	2393	46.0
Joe Davidson, Bowling Green	SO	14	54	2483	46.0
Austin Rehkow, Idaho	JR	12	49	2241	45.7
Trevor Daniel, Tennessee	SO	13	60	2742	45.7
Nick O'Toole, West Virginia	SR	13	71	3223	45.4
Johnny Townsend, Florida	SO	14	83	3765	45.4
Drew Riggleman, Arizona	SR	13	52	2357	45.3
Cason Beatty, Florida State	SR	13	61	2756	45.2

FIELD GOALS

	YEAR	G	FGA	FGM	PCT	FGM/G
Michael Badgley, Miami (Fla.)	SO	12	30	25	.833	2.08
Zane Gonzalez, Arizona State	JR	13	34	26	.765	2.00
Ross Martin, Duke	SR	13	30	26	.867	2.00
Tyler Rausa, Boise State	JR	13	30	25	.833	1.92
Austin Rehkow, Idaho	JR	12	27	23	.852	1.92
Griffin Oakes, Indiana	SO	13	29	24	.828	1.85
Greg Huegel, Clemson	FR	15	32	27	.844	1.80
Daniel Carlson, Auburn	SO	13	27	23	.852	1.77
Jake Elliott, Memphis	JR	13	28	23	.821	1.77
Andy Phillips, Utah	JR	13	27	23	.852	1.77
Joey Slye, Virginia Tech	SO	13	30	23	.767	1.77
Jonathan Barnes, Louisiana Tech	SO	13	26	22	.846	1.69

KICK RETURNS *(MINIMUM OF 1.2 RETURNS PER GAME)*

	YEAR	G	NO.	YDS	TD	AVG
Evan Berry, Tennessee	SO	13	21	804	3	38.3
Rashaad Penny, San Diego State	SO	14	24	804	3	33.5
Morgan Burns, Kansas State	SR	12	34	1138	4	33.5
Deandre Reaves, Marshall	SR	13	23	693	2	30.1
Devon Edwards, Duke	JR	13	24	700	3	29.2
Rodney Adams, South Florida	JR	13	16	466	1	29.1
Christian McCaffrey, Stanford	SO	14	37	1070	1	28.9
Michael Walker, Boston College	FR	12	24	686	0	28.6
Carlos Wiggins, New Mexico	SR	13	24	663	1	27.6
Der'Woun Greene, Virginia Tech	JR	11	16	438	0	27.4
Dishan Romine, Navy	JR	13	24	655	0	27.3
J.D. McKissic, Arkansas State	SR	13	24	654	1	27.3

TEAM LEADERS

RUSHING OFFENSE

	G	CAR	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Georgia Southern	13	728	4719	6.48	54	363.0
Baylor	13	714	4247	5.95	41	326.7
Navy	13	748	4247	5.68	53	326.7
Air Force	14	816	4468	5.48	45	319.1
Oregon	13	618	3639	5.89	34	279.9
Appalachian St.	13	605	3529	5.83	25	271.5
LSU	12	505	3082	6.10	36	256.8
Georgia Tech	12	583	3074	5.27	30	256.2
New Mexico	13	638	3278	5.14	42	252.2
South Florida	13	592	3205	5.41	28	246.5
Ohio State	13	567	3188	5.62	39	245.2
Army	12	616	2931	4.76	24	244.3
Houston	14	669	3301	4.93	46	235.8
San Diego State	14	675	3266	4.84	32	233.3
Arkansas State	13	608	3007	4.95	35	231.3
West Virginia	13	622	2967	4.77	25	228.2
Texas	12	529	2698	5.10	27	224.8

TURNOVER MARGIN

	GAINED			LOST			
	FUM	INT.	GAINED	FUM	INT.	LOST	MARGIN/G
San Diego State	11	23	34	9	3	12	1.57
Houston	14	21	35	7	7	14	1.50
Navy	15	12	27	6	2	8	1.46
Utah	12	22	34	10	11	21	1.00
Western Kentucky	14	17	31	8	9	17	1.00
Oklahoma State	11	17	28	5	10	15	1.00
Michigan State	13	15	28	6	8	14	1.00
Texas	12	13	25	8	6	14	0.92
Bowling Green	7	20	27	7	8	15	0.86
Miami (Fla.)	10	15	25	5	9	14	0.85
USC	9	14	23	5	7	12	0.79
Iowa	8	19	27	11	5	16	0.79
South Florida	8	17	25	6	9	15	0.77
Akron	14	14	28	6	12	18	0.77
Oklahoma	7	20	27	9	9	18	0.69
N.C. State	9	13	22	7	6	13	0.69

RUSHING DEFENSE

	G	CAR	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Alabama	15	468	1136	2.43	7	75.7
Boston College	12	416	994	2.39	6	82.8
Akron	13	410	1208	2.95	12	92.9
Wisconsin	13	396	1240	3.13	13	95.4
Boise State	13	440	1407	3.20	14	108.2
Utah	13	430	1412	3.28	11	108.6
San Diego State	14	482	1522	3.16	14	108.7
Houston	14	480	1524	3.18	16	108.9
Nebraska	13	379	1428	3.77	18	109.8
Toledo	12	413	1382	3.35	11	115.2
Michigan State	14	449	1624	3.62	16	116.0
Arkansas	13	403	1514	3.76	25	116.5
Louisiana Tech	13	440	1551	3.53	13	119.3
Louisville	13	477	1563	3.28	11	120.2
Iowa	14	469	1700	3.62	11	121.4
Michigan	13	437	1589	3.64	12	122.2
LSU	12	387	1475	3.81	14	122.9

PASSING OFFENSE

	G	ATT	COMP	INT	PCT	YDS	TD	YDS/G
Washington State	13	739	501	12	67.8	5064	41	389.5
Texas Tech	13	620	389	15	62.7	5046	39	388.2
California	13	550	352	14	64.0	4892	44	376.3
Western Kentucky	14	554	398	9	71.8	5211	50	372.2
Bowling Green	14	594	398	8	67.0	5135	47	366.8
Cincinnati	13	547	341	22	62.5	4679	29	359.9
Oklahoma State	13	517	325	10	62.9	4591	35	353.2
TCU	13	517	326	15	63.1	4517	39	347.5
Georgia State	13	496	308	12	62.1	4367	28	335.9
Ole Miss	13	489	318	14	65.0	4351	35	334.7
Tulsa	13	492	305	8	62.0	4332	25	333.2
Southern Miss	14	531	338	12	63.7	4616	40	329.7
Louisiana Tech	13	479	297	11	62.0	4201	28	323.2
Mississippi State	13	500	331	5	66.2	4113	33	316.4
Middle Tennessee	13	501	334	10	66.7	4052	31	311.7
Boise State	13	526	334	12	63.6	4032	24	310.2
Oklahoma	13	439	292	9	66.5	4006	38	308.2
Memphis	13	465	311	5	66.9	3997	30	307.5

TOTAL OFFENSE

	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Baylor	13	1103	8011	7.26	85	616.2
Texas Tech	13	1084	7533	6.95	73	579.5
TCU	13	1078	7317	6.79	65	562.8
Bowling Green	14	1136	7655	6.74	81	546.8
Oregon	13	993	6997	7.05	67	538.2
Cincinnati	13	1059	6992	6.60	54	537.8
Oklahoma	13	1013	6893	6.80	70	530.2
California	13	989	6879	6.96	60	529.2
Western Kentucky	14	1019	7369	7.23	80	526.4
Ole Miss	13	952	6731	7.07	64	517.8
Clemson	15	1207	7718	6.39	69	514.5
Southern Miss	14	1033	7133	6.91	71	509.5
Tulsa	13	1083	6596	6.09	58	507.4
Indiana	13	1053	6556	6.23	54	504.3
Boise State	13	1079	6520	6.04	60	501.5
Arizona	13	992	6434	6.49	58	494.9

PASS-EFFICIENCY DEFENSE

	G	ATT	COMP	PCT	INT	INT%	YDS	YDS/ATT	TD	TD%	RATING
Michigan	13	381	181	47.5	10	2.6	2060	5.4	8	2.1	94.60
Wisconsin	13	395	194	49.1	12	3.0	2251	5.7	7	1.8	96.76
Northwestern	13	452	244	54.0	12	2.7	2506	5.5	5	1.1	98.89
Marshall	13	450	224	49.8	15	3.3	2495	5.5	15	3.3	100.68
Boston College	12	334	173	51.8	13	3.9	2058	6.2	9	2.7	104.66
Ohio State	13	411	207	50.4	12	2.9	2398	5.8	14	3.4	104.78
Georgia	13	344	178	51.7	12	3.5	2034	5.9	11	3.2	104.99
Alabama	15	495	250	50.5	19	3.8	3009	6.1	17	3.4	105.22
Oklahoma	13	437	230	52.6	20	4.6	2636	6.0	19	4.3	108.50
San Diego State	14	381	204	53.5	23	6.0	2500	6.6	14	3.7	108.71
Clemson	15	437	212	48.5	16	3.7	2816	6.4	19	4.3	109.67
North Carolina	14	435	237	54.5	17	3.9	2640	6.1	16	3.7	109.78
Iowa	14	493	265	53.8	19	3.9	3074	6.2	17	3.4	109.80
Boise State	13	411	220	53.5	22	5.4	2731	6.6	14	3.4	109.88
Florida State	13	443	252	56.9	8	1.8	2491	5.6	14	3.2	110.94
Tennessee	13	434	220	50.7	12	2.8	2735	6.3	17	3.9	111.02

TOTAL DEFENSE

	G	PLAYS	YDS	AVG	TD	YDS/G
Boston College	12	750	3052	4.07	15	254.3
Wisconsin	13	791	3491	4.41	20	268.5
Alabama	15	963	4145	4.30	24	276.3
Michigan	13	818	3649	4.46	20	280.7
San Diego State	14	863	4022	4.66	28	287.3
Missouri	12	838	3624	4.32	21	302.0
Georgia	13	835	3977	4.76	22	305.9
Florida	14	933	4343	4.65	29	310.2
Ohio State	13	899	4047	4.50	24	311.3
Clemson	15	968	4695	4.85	37	313.0
Appalachian St.	13	871	4088	4.69	25	314.5
Boise State	13	851	4138	4.86	28	318.3
Northwestern	13	915	4146	4.53	26	318.9
Penn State	13	883	4218	4.78	33	324.5
Akron	13	888	4310	4.85	35	331.5
Central Michigan	13	841	4319	5.14	34	332.2
Utah State	13	891	4322	4.85	43	332.5

SCORING OFFENSE

	G	TD	PTS	PTS/G
Baylor	13	86	625	48.1
Texas Tech	13	77	586	45.1
West. Kentucky	14	82	620	44.3
Oklahoma	13	73	566	43.5
Bowling Green	14	82	591	42.2
TCU	13	69	547	42.1
Ole Miss	13	68	531	40.8
North Carolina	14	73	570	40.7
Houston	14	75	566	40.4
Memphis	13	64	522	40.2
Arkansas State	13	69	520	40.0
Southern Miss	14	75	559	39.9
Oklahoma State	13	67	514	39.5
Boise State	13	62	508	39.1
Clemson	15	71	577	38.5

SCORING DEFENSE

	G	TD	PTS	PTS/G
Wisconsin	13	22	178	13.7
Ohio State	13	24	196	15.1
Alabama	15	26	227	15.1
Boston College	12	19	183	15.3
Missouri	12	22	194	16.2
Michigan	13	24	213	16.4
San Diego State	14	29	230	16.4
Georgia	13	26	220	16.9
Florida State	13	26	227	17.5
Marshall	13	28	231	17.8
Florida	14	30	256	18.3
Northwestern	13	30	242	18.6
Washington	13	28	244	18.8
Appalachian St.	13	29	248	19.1
Connecticut	13	29	253	19.5
Tennessee	13	33	260	20.0

TARGETS

A look at the all-time FBS leaders and the players who could challenge them in 2016

→ **Active players in Bold** → **Statistics courtesy of the NCAA** → **Compiled by Will Long**

Cooper Rush, Central Michigan: 9,354 passing yards/67 touchdown passes

PASSING YARDS	
Case Keenum, Houston	19,217
Timmy Chang, Hawaii	17,072
Landry Jones, Oklahoma	16,646
Graham Harrell, Texas Tech	15,793
Ty Detmer, BYU	15,031
Kellen Moore, Boise State	14,667
Colt Brennan, Hawaii	14,193
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	14,079
Sean Mannion, Oregon State	13,600
Philip Rivers, N.C. State	13,484
Corey Robinson, Troy	13,477
Colt McCoy, Texas	13,253
Aaron Murray, Georgia	13,166
Kevin Kolb, Houston	12,964
Dan LeFevour, C. Michigan	12,905
Brandon Doughty, West. Ky.	12,855
Derek Carr, Fresno State	12,843
Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech	12,746
Ryan Lindley, San Diego St.	12,690
Luke McCown, La. Tech	12,666
Chris Redman, Louisville	12,541
Chase Daniel, Missouri	12,515
Trevor Vittatoe, UTEP	12,439
Kliff Kingsbury, Texas Tech	12,429
Matt Barkley, USC	12,327
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Cooper Rush, C. Michigan	9,354
Nick Mullens, Southern Miss	8,722
Zach Terrell, W. Michigan	8,555

POINTS	
Keenan Reynolds, Navy	528
Kenneth Dixon, La. Tech	522
Montee Ball, Wisconsin	500
Travis Prentice, Miami (Ohio)	468
Dustin Hopkins, Florida State	466
Ricky Williams, Texas	452
Aaron Jones, Baylor	451
Mike Hunnicutt, Oklahoma	450
Kyle Brotzman, Boise State	439
Art Carmody, Louisville	433
Ross Martin, Duke	430
Kevin Kelly, Penn State	425
Roman Anderson, Houston	423
Taurean Henderson, Texas Tech	414
Ka'imi Fairbairn, UCLA	413
Blair Walsh, Georgia	412
Billy Bennett, Georgia	409
Brock Forsey, Boise State	408
Ross Evans, TCU	407
Matt Weller, Ohio	407
Roberto Aguayo, Fla. State	405
Matt Hogan, Houston	405
Cedric Benson, Texas	404
Chandler Catanzaro, Clemson	404
Jeremy Ito, Rutgers	400
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Josh Lambert, West Virginia	337
Jake Elliott, Memphis	324
Andy Phillips, Utah	321

TOUCHDOWN PASSES	
Case Keenum, Houston	155
Kellen Moore, Boise State	142
Graham Harrell, Texas Tech	134
Colt Brennan, Hawaii	131
Rakeem Cato, Marshall	131
Landry Jones, Oklahoma	123
Ty Detmer, BYU	121
Aaron Murray, Georgia	121
Timmy Chang, Hawaii	117
Matt Barkley, USC	116
Tim Rattay, Louisiana Tech	115
Danny Wuerffel, Florida	114
Derek Carr, Fresno State	113
Colt McCoy, Texas	112
Brandon Doughty, West. Kty.	111
Russell Wilson, N.C. State/Wisc.	109
Tajh Boyd, Clemson	107
Chad Pennington, Marshall	107
Marcus Mariota, Oregon	105
Dan LeFevour, C. Michigan	102
Chase Daniel, Missouri	101
Matt Leinart, USC	99
Chase Clement, Rice	99
Tim Hiller, Western Michigan	99
Geno Smith, West Virginia	98
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Cooper Rush, C. Michigan	67
Nick Mullens, Southern Miss	63
Zach Terrell, W. Michigan	63

RUSHING YARDS	
Ron Dayne, Wisconsin	7,125
Tony Dorsett, Pittsburgh	6,526
Ricky Williams, Texas	6,279
Charles White, USC	6,245
DeAngelo Williams, Memphis	6,026
Travis Prentice, Miami (Ohio)	5,596
Archie Griffin, Ohio State	5,589
Cedric Benson, Texas	5,540
LaDainian Tomlinson, TCU	5,387
Damion Fletcher, South. Miss	5,302
Anthony Thompson, Indiana	5,299
Herschel Walker, Georgia	5,259
Garrett Wolfe, N. Illinois	5,164
Montee Ball, Wisconsin	5,140
George Rogers, S. Carolina	5,091
LaMichael James, Oregon	5,082
Ken Simonton, Oregon State	5,044
Mike Hart, Michigan	5,040
Avon Cobourne, West Va.	5,039
Darren Lewis, Texas A&M	5,012
Darren Sproles, Kansas State	4,979
DonTrell Moore, New Mexico	4,956
Trevor Cobb, Rice	4,948
Michael Turner, N. Illinois	4,941
Ray Rice, Rutgers	4,926
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Donnel Pumphrey, S.D. State	4,272
Kareem Hunt, Toledo	3,470
Shock Linwood, Baylor	3,462

RUSH: AL GOLDIS / AP; JONES: JOHN RAOUX / AP; KING: CHARLIE NEIBERGALL / AP

RECEPTIONS

Justin Hardy, East Carolina	387	Nelson Spruce, Colorado	294
Ryan Broyles, Oklahoma	349	Davone Bess, Hawaii	293
Taylor Stubblefield, Purdue	325	Rashaun Woods, Okla. State	293
Tommy Shuler, Marshall	322	Dorien Bryant, Purdue	292
Tyron Carrier, Houston	320	Jarett Dillard, Rice	292
Josh Davis, Marshall	306	Jason Rivers, Hawaii	292
Eric Page, Toledo	306	Patrick Edwards, Houston	291
Jordan White, W. Michigan	306	Bryan Anderson, C. Michigan	290
Antonio Brown, C. Michigan	305	J.D. McKissic, Arkansas State	289
Taurean Henderson, Tex. Tech	303	Tavon Austin, West Virginia	288
Kendall Wright, Baylor	302	**KNOCKING ON THE DOOR** *(active career leaders)*	
Arnold Jackson, Louisville	300		
Trevor Insley, Nevada	298	**Isaiah Jones, East Carolina**	241
Freddie Barnes, Bowling Green	297	**Corey Davis, W. Michigan**	235
Geoff Noisy, Nevada	295	**Gabe Marks, Wash. State**	227

Isaiah Jones, East Carolina: 241 receptions

Desmond King, Iowa: 11 interceptions

INTERCEPTIONS

Al Brosky, Illinois	29
John Provost, Holy Cross	27
Martin Bayless, Bowling Green	27
Tom Curtis, Michigan	25
Tony Thurman, Boston College	25
Tracy Saul, Texas Tech	25
Jeff Nixon, Richmond	23
Jim Bolding, East Carolina	22
Lamont Thompson, Wash. St.	22
Mike Sensibaugh, Ohio State	21
Barry Hill, Iowa State	21
Chuck Cecil, Arizona	21
Terrell Buckley, Florida State	21
Ed Reed, Miami (Fla.)	21
Jim Leonhard, Wisconsin	21
Alphonso Smith, Wake Forest	21
Lynn Chandnois, Michigan State	20
Bobby Wilson, Ole Miss	20
Tom Wilson, Colgate	20
Jackie Wallace, Arizona	20
Dave Atkinson, BYU	20
Artimus Parker, USC	20
Charles Jefferson, McNeese St.	20
Chris Williams, LSU	20
Anthony Young, Temple	20
Mark Collins, C.S. Fullerton	20
Kevin Smith, Texas A&M	20
Ray Jackson, Colorado State	20
Dre' Bly, North Carolina	20
Mitch Meeuwsen, Oregon State	20
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Desmond King, Iowa	11
Skai Moore, South Carolina	11
Weston Steelhammer, Air Force	11

RECEIVING YARDS

Trevor Insley, Nevada	5,005
Ryan Broyles, Oklahoma	4,586
Justin Hardy, East Carolina	4,541
Marcus Harris, Wyoming	4,518
Patrick Edwards, Houston	4,507
Rashaun Woods, Okla. State	4,414
Ryan Yarborough, Wyoming	4,374
Troy Edwards, La. Tech	4,352
Aaron Turner, Pacific	4,345
Greg Salas, Hawaii	4,345
Terance Mathis, New Mexico	4,254
Geoff Noisy, Nevada	4,249
Jordan White, W. Michigan	4,187
Jarett Dillard, Rice	4,138
Darius Watts, Marshall	4,031
Kendall Wright, Baylor	4,004
Troy Walters, Stanford	3,986
Derek Hagan, Arizona State	3,939
Mike Hass, Oregon State	3,924
Jason Rivers, Hawaii	3,919
Josh Davis, Marshall	3,889
Roy Williams, Texas	3,866
Rashad Greene, Florida State	3,830
Emmanuel Sanders, SMU	3,791
John Standeford, Purdue	3,788
Vincent Marshall, Houston	3,770
Chad Mackey, La. Tech	3,763
Jordan Matthews, Vandy	3,759
Conner Vernon, Duke	3,749
Marc Zeno, Tulane	3,725
KNOCKING ON THE DOOR *(active career leaders)*	
Corey Davis, W. Michigan	3,785
Austin Duke, Charlotte	2,634
Gabe Marks, Wash. State	2,559

SCHEDULES

2016 FCS SCHEDULES

Compiled by Will Long

ABILENE CHRISTIAN
Abilene, TX

S.3	@AIR FORCE	
S.10	Northern Colorado	36-40
S.17	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	49-21
S.24	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	35-32
0.1	Central Arkansas	14-42
0.8	Lamar	28-44
0.15	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	21-49
0.22	Incarnate Word	20-25
0.29	@MCNEESE STATE	13-15
N.5	Northwestern State	22-39
N.12	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	21-17

Coach: Ken Collums
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 3-8

ALABAMA A&M
Normal, AL

S.3	@MIDDLE TENNESSEE	
S.10	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	24-27
S.17	Prairie View A&M	49-53
S.24	Southern	7-46
0.1	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	38-7
0.8	Alcorn State	10-44
0.15	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	28-9
0.29	Alabama State*	20-35
N.5	Grambling State	14-37
N.12	@JACKSON STATE	28-22
N.19	@AUBURN	

*At Birmingham, AL
Coach: James Spady
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 3-8

ALABAMA STATE
Montgomery, AL

S.3	@UTSA	
S.10	@ALCORN STATE	14-31
S.17	@SOUTHERN	34-45
S.24	Texas Southern	41-23
0.1	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	31-24
0.8	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	13-38
0.15	Mississippi Valley State	45-15
0.29	Alabama A&M*	35-20
N.5	Jackson State	17-12
N.12	@GRAMBLING STATE	10-34
N.24	Miles	26-7

*At Birmingham, AL
Coach: Brian Jenkins
Nickname: Hornets
2015 Record: 6-5

ALBANY
Albany, NY

S.2	@BUFFALO	14-51
S.10	@RHODE ISLAND	35-7
S.17	Holy Cross	0-37
S.24	St. Francis (PA)	
0.8	Richmond	31-38
0.15	@MAINE	7-39
0.22	@VILLANOVA	0-37
0.29	Elon	
N.5	Delaware	17-6
N.12	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	14-24
N.19	Stony Brook	2-20

Coach: Greg Gattuso
Nickname: Great Danes
2015 Record: 3-8

ALCORN STATE
Lorman, MS

S.4	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	
S.10	Alabama State	31-14
S.17	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	61-14
S.24	@GRAMBLING STATE	49-21
0.1	@ARKANSAS*	
0.8	@ALABAMA A&M	44-10
0.15	Texas Southern	65-13
0.29	Southern	48-7
N.5	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	34-40
N.12	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	55-14
N.19	Jackson State	14-10

*At Little Rock, AR
Coach: Fred McNair
Nickname: Braves
2015 Record: 9-4

ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF
Pine Bluff, AR

S.3	@TENNESSEE STATE*	
S.17	@ALCORN STATE	14-61
S.24	Jackson State	3-37
0.1	@ALABAMA STATE	24-31
0.15	Alabama A&M	9-28
0.22	@SOUTHERN	24-57
0.29	@GRAMBLING STATE	31-49
N.5	Mississippi Valley State	25-19
N.12	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	20-24
N.19	Prairie View A&M	29-54

*At Nissan Stadium
Coach: Monte Coleman
Nickname: Golden Lions
2015 Record: 2-9

AUSTIN PEAY
Clarksville, TN

S.3	@TROY	
S.10	Tennessee Tech	24-42
S.24	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	16-40
0.1	Murray State	18-34
0.8	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	14-44
0.15	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	7-27
0.22	Mercer	7-28
0.29	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	15-44
N.5	Tennessee State	6-20
N.12	Eastern Kentucky	13-51
N.19	@KENTUCKY	

Coach: Will Healy
Nickname: Governors
2015 Record: 0-11

BETHUNE-COOKMAN
Daytona Beach, FL

S.4	Alcorn State	
S.10	@NORTH TEXAS	
S.17	Tennessee State	
S.24	@SAVANNAH STATE	42-12
0.1	North Carolina Central	28-26
0.8	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	17-14
0.15	North Carolina A&T	14-24
0.22	@NORFOLK STATE	59-49
0.29	Delaware State	49-21
N.5	@MORGAN STATE	38-14
N.19	Florida A&M*	38-14

*At Orlando, FL
Coach: Terry Sims
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 9-2

BROWN
Providence, RI

S.17	@BRYANT	16-20
S.24	Harvard	27-53
0.1	@RHODE ISLAND	41-31
0.8	Stetson	
0.15	@PRINCETON	38-31
0.22	Cornell	44-24
0.29	@PENNSYLVANIA	28-48
N.5	Yale	14-41
N.12	@DARTMOUTH	18-34
N.19	Columbia	28-23

Coach: Phil Estes
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 5-5

BRYANT
Smithfield, RI

S.3	Merrimack	
S.10	@MONTANA STATE	
S.17	Brown	20-16
S.24	Central Connecticut State	33-35
0.1	@MAINE	
0.15	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	26-24
0.22	Wagner	40-10
0.29	@DUQUESNE	38-17
N.5	Robert Morris	20-21
N.12	@COASTAL CAROLINA	17-31
N.19	@SACRED HEART	19-28

Coach: Marty Fine
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 5-6

BUCKNELL
Lewisburg, PA

S.3	@MARIST	17-0
S.10	@DUQUESNE	7-26
S.17	Cornell	19-14
S.24	VMI	28-22
0.8	@HOLY CROSS	7-23
0.15	Colgate	10-14
0.22	Lafayette	35-24
0.29	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	
N.5	@LEHIGH	10-21
N.12	@GEORGETOWN	9-17
N.19	Fordham	16-24

Coach: Joe Susan
Nickname: Bison
2015 Record: 4-7

BUTLER
Indianapolis, IN

S.3	@INDIANA STATE	17-52
S.10	Franklin	41-14
S.17	@TAYLOR	41-10
S.24	@CAMPBELL	25-24
0.1	San Diego	27-28
0.8	Marist	14-35
0.15	@DAVIDSON	38-7
0.22	Dayton	24-27
0.29	@VALPARAISO	42-21
N.5	Morehead State	21-34
N.12	@DRAKE	20-13

Coach: Jeff Voris
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 6-5

CAL POLY
San Luis Obispo, CA

S.3	@NEVADA	
S.10	San Diego	
S.17	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	
S.24	Montana	20-19
0.1	@NORTH DAKOTA	21-45
0.15	@PORTLAND STATE	35-38
0.22	UC Davis	55-38
0.29	@SACRAMENTO STATE	36-14
N.5	Eastern Washington	41-42
N.12	@WEBER STATE	
N.19	Northern Colorado	

Coach: Tim Walsh
Nickname: Mustangs
2015 Record: 4-7

CAMPBELL
Buies Creek, NC

S.1	Bluefield	
S.10	@CHOWAN	35-3
S.17	Presbyterian	13-23
S.24	Butler	24-25
0.1	@MARIST	10-13
0.8	@JACKSONVILLE	14-20
0.22	Stetson	16-6
0.29	@DRAKE	24-14
N.5	Davidson	39-9
N.12	@MOREHEAD STATE	27-31
N.19	San Diego	27-31

Coach: Mike Minter
Nickname: Fighting Camels
2015 Record: 5-6

CENTRAL ARKANSAS
Conway, AR

S.1	Houston Baptist	43-7
S.10	Samford	16-45
S.17	Northwestern State	49-21
S.24	@ARKANSAS STATE	
0.1	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	42-14
0.15	@MCNEESE STATE	13-28
0.22	Lamar	35-17
0.29	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	21-16
N.5	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	36-24
N.12	Nicholls State	34-31
N.19	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	13-42

Coach: Steve Campbell
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 7-4

CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE
New Britain, CT

S.2	Lafayette	
S.10	@JAMES MADISON	
S.17	Bowie State	21-14
S.24	@BRYANT	35-33
0.8	@PENNSYLVANIA	
0.15	Wagner	7-28
0.22	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
0.29	@ROBERT MORRIS	34-0
N.5	Sacred Heart	26-10
N.12	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	13-22
N.19	Duquesne	10-27

Coach: Pete Rossomando
Nickname: Blue Devils
2015 Record: 4-7

CHARLESTON SOUTHERN
Charleston, SC

A.27	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	
S.1	Kentucky State	
S.10	@FLORIDA STATE	
S.24	@MONMOUTH	37-7
0.1	@COASTAL CAROLINA	33-25
0.8	Albany State	
0.22	Presbyterian	10-7
0.29	Bucknell	
N.5	Gardner-Webb	34-0
N.12	@LIBERTY	31-24
N.19	Kennesaw State	28-14

Coach: Jamey Chadwell
Nickname: Buccaneers
2015 Record: 10-3

CHATTANOOGA
Chattanooga, TN

S.1	Shorter	
S.10	Presbyterian	21-0
S.17	@FURMAN	31-3
S.24	Samford	31-21
0.1	@EAST TENNESSEE STATE	
0.8	Mercer	14-17
0.15	@CITADEL	31-23
0.22	VMI	33-27
0.29	@WESTERN CAROLINA	41-13
N.12	Wofford	20-17
N.19	@ALABAMA	

Coach: Russ Huesman
Nickname: Mocs
2015 Record: 9-4

CITADEL
Charleston, SC

S.1	@MERCER	21-19
S.10	Furman	38-17
S.17	@GARDNER-WEBB	
0.1	@WESTERN CAROLINA	28-10
0.8	North Greenville	
0.15	Chattanooga	23-31
0.22	@WOFFORD	39-12
0.29	East Tennessee State	
N.5	Samford	44-25
N.12	@VMI	35-14
N.19	@NORTH CAROLINA	

Coach: Brent Thompson
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 9-4

COLGATE
Hamilton, NY

S.2	@SYRACUSE	
S.17	@YALE	28-29
S.24	@RICHMOND	
0.1	Cornell	28-21
0.8	@LEHIGH	49-42
0.15	@BUCKNELL	14-10
0.29	Holy Cross	31-14

N.5	@FORDHAM	31-29
N.12	Lafayette	28-19
N.19	Georgetown	17-13

Coach: Dan Hunt
Nickname: Raiders
2015 Record: 9-5

COLUMBIA
New York, NY

S.17	St. Francis (Pa.)	
S.24	@GEORGETOWN	16-24
O.1	Princeton	5-10
O.8	@WAGNER	26-3
O.15	@PENNSYLVANIA	7-42
O.22	Dartmouth	9-13
O.29	Yale	17-7
N.5	@HARVARD	16-24
N.12	Cornell	0-3
N.19	@BROWN	23-28

Coach: Al Bagnoli
Nickname: Lions
2015 Record: 2-8

CORNELL
Ithaca, NY

S.17	@BUCKNELL	14-19
S.24	Yale	26-33
O.1	@COLGATE	21-28
O.8	@HARVARD	3-40
O.15	Sacred Heart	6-31
O.22	@BROWN	24-44
O.29	Princeton	21-47
N.5	Dartmouth	3-21
N.12	@COLUMBIA	3-0
N.19	Pennsylvania	21-34

Coach: David Archer
Nickname: Big Red
2015 Record: 1-9

DARTMOUTH
Hanover, NH

S.17	New Hampshire	
S.24	@HOLY CROSS	
O.1	Pennsylvania	41-20
O.8	@YALE	35-3
O.15	Towson	
O.22	@COLUMBIA	13-9
O.29	Harvard	13-14
N.5	@CORNELL	21-3
N.12	Brown	34-18
N.19	@PRINCETON	17-10

Coach: Buddy Teevens
Nickname: Big Green
2015 Record: 9-1

DAVIDSON
Davidson, NC

S.3	@GEORGETOWN	
S.17	Livingstone	
S.24	@VALPARAISO	35-42
O.1	Stetson	20-17
O.8	@SAN DIEGO	10-35
O.15	Butler	7-38
O.22	@MARIST	10-31
O.29	Jacksonville	12-42
N.5	@CAMPBELL	9-39
N.19	Morehead State	0-34

Coach: Paul Nichols
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 2-9

DAYTON
Dayton, OH

S.3	Central State	
S.10	Robert Morris	27-24
S.17	@DUQUESNE	24-13
S.24	@SAN DIEGO	13-12
O.1	Drake	17-27
O.8	Morehead State	20-15
O.15	@JACKSONVILLE	31-14
O.22	@BUTLER	27-24
O.29	Stetson	27-14
N.5	Valparaiso	44-14
N.12	@MARIST	28-21

Coach: Rick Chamberlin
Nickname: Flyers
2015 Record: 10-2

DELAWARE
Newark, DE

S.1	Delaware State	
S.10	@LAFAYETTE	19-9
S.17	@WAKE FOREST	
O.1	@JAMES MADISON	21-24
O.8	Maine	
O.15	@WILLIAM & MARY	24-23
O.22	Stony Brook	
O.29	Towson	0-19
N.5	@ALBANY	6-17
N.12	@RICHMOND	
N.19	Villanova	21-28

Coach: Dave Brock
Nickname: Blue Hens
2015 Record: 4-7

DELAWARE STATE
Dover, DE

S.1	@DELAWARE	
S.10	Monmouth	
S.24	@MISSOURI	
O.1	@MORGAN STATE	6-26
O.8	Hampton	7-21
O.15	Florida A&M	13-41
O.22	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	7-34
O.29	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	21-49
N.5	North Carolina Central	10-43
N.12	North Carolina A&T	6-27
N.19	@HOWARD	32-31

Coach: Kenny Carter
Nickname: Hornets
2015 Record: 1-10

DRAKE
Des Moines, IA

S.3	Quincy	
S.10	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	
S.17	McKendree	
S.24	Morehead State	35-38
O.1	@DAYTON	27-17
O.8	@VALPARAISO	34-7
O.15	San Diego	0-27
O.29	Campbell	14-24
N.5	@JACKSONVILLE	28-24
N.12	Butler	13-20
N.19	@STETSON	41-3

Coach: Rick Fox
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 5-6

DUQUESNE
Pittsburgh, PA

S.1	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	
S.10	Bucknell	26-7
S.17	Dayton	13-24
S.24	Kennesaw State	
O.1	@JACKSONVILLE	
O.15	Robert Morris	16-7
O.22	@ST. FRANCIS (PA)	30-20
O.29	Bryant	17-38
N.5	@WAGNER	35-17
N.12	Sacred Heart	41-14
N.19	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	27-10

Coach: Jerry Schmitt
Nickname: Dukes
2015 Record: 8-4

EAST TENNESSEE STATE
Johnson City, TN

S.3	@KENNESAW STATE	16-56
S.17	Western Carolina*	
S.24	@WOFFORD	
O.1	Chattanooga	
O.8	@VMI	
O.15	Furman	
O.20	West Virginia Wesleyan	
O.29	@CITADEL	
N.5	@MERCER	0-52
N.12	Cumberland (Tenn.)	
N.19	Samford	

**At Bristol, TN*
Coach: Carl Torbush
Nickname: Bucs
2015 Record: 2-9

EASTERN ILLINOIS
Charleston, IL

S.1	Western Illinois	5-33
S.10	@MIAMI (OHIO)	
S.17	@ILLINOIS STATE	31-34
S.24	Austin Peay	40-16
O.1	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	33-28
O.8	Tennessee State	25-22
O.15	@TENNESSEE TECH	51-20
O.22	Murray State	34-20
O.29	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	3-24
N.5	Tennessee-Martin	23-21
N.19	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	21-7

Coach: Kim Dameron
Nickname: Panthers
2015 Record: 7-5

EASTERN KENTUCKY
Richmond, KY

S.3	@PURDUE	
S.8	Pikeville	
S.17	@BALL STATE	
O.1	@TENNESSEE TECH	48-17
O.8	Southeast Missouri State	27-10
O.15	@TENNESSEE STATE*	45-21
O.22	Jacksonville State	0-34
O.29	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	35-42
N.5	Murray State	41-34
N.12	@AUSTIN PEAY	51-13
N.19	Eastern Illinois	7-21

**At Nissan Stadium*
Coach: Mark Elder
Nickname: Colonels
2015 Record: 6-5

EASTERN WASHINGTON
Cheney, WA

S.3	@WASHINGTON STATE	
S.10	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	
S.17	Northern Iowa	35-38
S.24	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	30-52
O.1	UC Davis	
O.8	Northern Colorado	43-41
O.22	@MONTANA STATE	55-50
O.29	Montana	16-57
N.5	@CAL POLY	42-41
N.12	Idaho State	45-28
N.18	@PORTLAND STATE	31-34

Coach: Beau Baldwin
Nickname: Eagles
2015 Record: 6-5

ELON
Elon, NC

S.3	Gardner-Webb	21-13
S.10	@CHARLOTTE	
S.17	Fayetteville State	
S.24	@WILLIAM & MARY	13-34
O.1	Villanova	
O.8	New Hampshire	14-37
O.22	Richmond	14-27
O.29	@ALBANY	
N.5	@TOWSON	17-13
N.12	Rhode Island	
N.19	@JAMES MADISON	0-51

Coach: Rich Skrosky
Nickname: Phoenix
2015 Record: 4-7

FLORIDA A&M
Tallahassee, FL

S.3	@MIAMI (FLA.)	
S.10	@COASTAL CAROLINA	
S.17	Tuskegee*	
S.24	South Carolina State	0-36
O.1	Savannah State	27-37
O.8	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	24-27
O.15	@DELAWARE STATE	41-13
O.22	Hampton	0-33
O.29	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	10-28
N.12	Morgan State	7-21
N.19	Bethune-Cookman**	14-35

**At Mobile, AL, **At Orlando, FL*
Coach: Alex Wood
Nickname: Rattlers
2015 Record: 1-10

FORDHAM
Bronx, NY

S.3	@NAVY	
S.10	Elizabeth City State	
S.24	Pennsylvania	48-45
O.1	@MONMOUTH	54-31
O.8	Lafayette	35-7
O.15	Yale	
O.22	Georgetown	38-31
O.29	@LEHIGH	59-42
N.5	Colgate	29-31
N.12	Holy Cross*	47-41
N.19	@BUCKNELL	24-16

**At Yankee Stadium*
Coach: Andrew Breiner
Nickname: Rams
2015 Record: 9-3

FURMAN
Greenville, SC

S.2	@MICHIGAN STATE	
S.10	@CITADEL	17-38
S.17	Chattanooga	3-31
S.24	@COASTAL CAROLINA	35-38
O.1	Kennesaw State	
O.8	Samford	20-17
O.15	@EAST TENNESSEE STATE	
O.29	@VMI	24-21
N.5	Wofford	28-38
N.12	Western Carolina	10-48
N.19	@MERCER	20-27

Coach: Bruce Fowler
Nickname: Paladins
2015 Record: 4-7

GARDNER-WEBB
Boiling Springs, NC

S.3	@ELON	13-21
S.10	@WESTERN CAROLINA	
S.17	Citadel	
S.24	@OHIO	
O.1	Benedict	
O.8	Presbyterian	0-46
O.15	Coastal Carolina	14-10
O.22	Kennesaw State	7-12
O.29	@LIBERTY	34-20
N.5	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	0-34
N.19	Monmouth	9-23

Coach: Carroll McCray
Nickname: Runnin' Bulldogs
2015 Record: 4-7

GEORGETOWN
Washington, DC

S.3	Davidson	
S.10	@MARIST	34-7
S.24	Columbia	
S.30	@HARVARD	0-45
O.8	Princeton	
O.15	Lehigh	28-33
O.22	@FORDHAM	31-38
O.29	@LAFAYETTE	38-7
N.5	Holy Cross	7-45
N.12	Bucknell	17-9
N.19	@COLGATE	13-17

Coach: Rob Sgarlata
Nickname: Hoyas
2015 Record: 4-7

GRAMBLING STATE
Grambling, LA

S.3	Virginia-Lynchburg	
S.10	@ARIZONA	
S.17	@JACKSON STATE	59-27
S.24	Alcorn State	35-34
O.1	Prairie View A&M*	70-54
O.22	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	49-14
O.29	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	49-31
N.5	@ALABAMA A&M	37-14
N.12	Alabama State	34-10
N.19	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	41-15
N.26	Southern**	34-23

**At Dallas, TX, **At New Orleans, LA*
Coach: Broderick Fobbs
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 9-2

HAMPTON
Hampton, VA

S.3	@OLD DOMINION	
S.10	William & Mary	7-40
S.17	Howard*	37-19
O.1	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	31-45
O.8	@DELAWARE STATE	21-7
O.15	Morgan State	20-10
O.22	@FLORIDA A&M	33-0
O.29	South Carolina State	20-34
N.12	Savannah State	42-3
N.19	Norfolk State	14-24
N.26	@COASTAL CAROLINA	

**At RFK Stadium*
Coach: Connell Maynor
Nickname: Pirates
2015 Record: 6-5

SCHEDULES

2016 FCS SCHEDULES

HARVARD
Cambridge, MA

S.16	Rhode Island	41-10
S.24	@BROWN	53-27
S.30	Georgetown	45-0
O.8	Cornell	40-3
O.15	@HOLY CROSS	
O.22	@PRINCETON	42-7
O.29	@DARTMOUTH	14-13
N.5	Columbia	24-16
N.12	@PENNSYLVANIA	25-35
N.19	Yale	38-19

Coach: Tim Murphy
Nickname: Crimson
2015 Record: 9-1

HOLY CROSS
Worcester, MA

S.3	@MORGAN STATE	
S.10	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	
S.17	@ALBANY	37-0
S.24	Dartmouth	
O.1	@LAFAYETTE	42-0
O.8	Bucknell	23-7
O.15	Harvard	
O.22	Lehigh	38-51
O.29	@COLGATE	14-31
N.5	@GEORGETOWN	45-7
N.12	Fordham*	41-47

**At Yankee Stadium*
Coach: Tom Gilmore
Nickname: Crusaders
2015 Record: 6-5

HOUSTON BAPTIST
Houston, TX

S.1	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	7-43
S.10	Texas Southern	
S.17	Abilene Christian	21-49
S.24	Sam Houston State	14-63
O.1	@WESTERN KENTUCKY	
O.15	Nicholls State	17-38
O.22	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	7-22
O.29	@LAMAR	7-55
N.5	@UTEP	
N.12	Stephen F. Austin	20-55
N.19	@INCARNATE WORD	3-30

Coach: Vic Shealy
Nickname: Huskies
2015 Record: 2-9

HOWARD
Washington, DC

S.3	@MARYLAND	
S.10	@RUTGERS	
S.17	Hampton*	19-37
S.24	Morgan State**	13-21
O.1	@NORFOLK STATE	12-15
O.8	Monmouth	
O.15	South Carolina State	10-49
O.22	North Carolina A&T	14-65
O.29	@SAVANNAH STATE	55-9
N.12	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	6-41
N.19	Delaware State	31-32

**At RFK Stadium, **At East Rutherford, NJ*
Coach: Gary Harrell
Nickname: Bison
2015 Record: 1-10

IDAHO STATE
Pocatello, ID

S.3	Simon Fraser	
S.10	@COLORADO	
S.17	@OREGON STATE	
S.24	Sacramento State	13-38
O.1	@PORTLAND STATE	14-34
O.15	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	
O.22	North Dakota	37-31
O.29	Southern Utah	
N.5	@MONTANA	27-33
N.12	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	28-45
N.19	Weber State	14-35

Coach: Mike Kramer
Nickname: Bengals
2015 Record: 2-9

ILLINOIS STATE
Normal, IL

S.3	Valparaiso	
S.10	@NORTHWESTERN	
S.17	Eastern Illinois	34-31
S.24	@INDIANA STATE	27-24
O.1	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	
O.8	Youngstown State	31-29
O.15	Southern Illinois	42-21
O.22	@SOUTH DAKOTA	46-0
O.29	South Dakota State	20-25
N.5	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	36-19
N.12	Missouri State	38-2

Coach: Brock Spack
Nickname: Redbirds
2015 Record: 10-3

INCARNATE WORD
San Antonio, TX

S.3	Texas A&M-Kingsville	18-16
S.10	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	45-31
S.17	@NICHOLLS STATE	20-10
S.24	McNeese State	6-43
O.1	@TEXAS STATE	
O.8	Sam Houston State	7-59
O.22	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	25-20
O.29	Stephen F. Austin	21-55
N.5	Southeastern Louisiana	16-2
N.12	@LAMAR	21-28
N.19	Houston Baptist	30-3

Coach: Larry Kennan
Nickname: Cardinals
2015 Record: 6-5

INDIANA STATE
Terre Haute, IN

S.3	Butler	52-17
S.10	@MINNESOTA	
S.17	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	29-28
S.24	Illinois State	24-27
O.1	Missouri State	56-28
O.8	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	30-37
O.15	South Dakota	
O.22	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	39-36
O.29	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	27-24
N.5	Northern Iowa	13-59
N.12	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	14-28

Coach: Mike Sanford
Nickname: Sycamores
2015 Record: 5-6

JACKSON STATE
Jackson, MS

S.1	@UNLV	
S.10	Tennessee State*	25-35
S.17	Grambling State	27-59
S.24	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	37-3
O.1	Mississippi Valley State	26-16
O.15	Southern	31-50
O.22	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	34-30
O.29	Prairie View A&M	14-56
N.5	@ALABAMA STATE	12-17
N.12	Alabama A&M	22-28
N.19	@ALCORN STATE	10-14

**At Memphis, TN*
Coach: Tony Hughes
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 3-8

JACKSONVILLE
Jacksonville, FL

S.10	@LIBERTY	
S.17	Edward Waters	49-28
S.24	@STETSON	41-14
O.1	Duquesne	
O.8	Campbell	20-14
O.15	Dayton	14-31
O.22	@MOREHEAD STATE	30-26
O.29	@DAVIDSON	42-12
N.5	Drake	24-28
N.12	@VALPARAISO	58-13
N.19	Marist	20-16

Coach: Ian Shields
Nickname: Dolphins
2015 Record: 9-2

JACKSONVILLE STATE
Jacksonville, AL

S.1	North Alabama	
S.10	@LSU	
S.17	Coastal Carolina	
S.24	@LIBERTY	
O.8	Tennessee Tech	42-13
O.15	Austin Peay	27-7
O.22	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	34-0
O.29	Eastern Illinois	24-3
N.5	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	56-28
N.12	@MURRAY STATE	42-20
N.19	Tennessee-Martin	48-41

Coach: John Grass
Nickname: Gamecocks
2015 Record: 13-2

JAMES MADISON
Harrisonburg, VA

S.3	Morehead State	56-7
S.10	Central Connecticut State	
S.17	@NORTH CAROLINA	
S.24	@MAINE	
O.1	Delaware	24-21
O.8	William & Mary	41-44
O.15	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	
O.29	Rhode Island	
N.5	@RICHMOND	49-59
N.12	@VILLANOVA	38-29
N.19	Elon	51-0

Coach: Mike Houston
Nickname: Dukes
2015 Record: 9-3

KENNESAW STATE
Kennesaw, GA

S.3	East Tennessee State	56-16
S.10	Point (GA)	56-17
S.24	@DUQUESNE	
O.1	@FURMAN	
O.8	Missouri S&T	
O.15	Liberty	35-45
O.22	@GARDNER-WEBB	12-7
O.29	@MONMOUTH	23-13
N.5	Clark Atlanta	
N.12	Presbyterian	6-14
N.19	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	14-28

Coach: Brian Bohannon
Nickname: Owls
2015 Record: 6-5

LAFAYETTE
Easton, PA

S.2	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	
S.10	Delaware	9-19
S.17	@PRINCETON	7-40
S.24	Villanova	
O.1	Holy Cross	0-42
O.8	@FORDHAM	7-35
O.15	@ARMY	
O.22	@BUCKNELL	24-35
O.29	Georgetown	7-38
N.12	@COLGATE	19-28
N.19	Lehigh	35-49

Coach: Frank Tavani
Nickname: Leopards
2015 Record: 1-10

LAMAR
Beaumont, TX

S.3	Coastal Carolina	
S.10	@HOUSTON	
S.17	Sam Houston State	49-46
O.1	Southeastern Louisiana	27-30
O.8	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	44-28
O.15	Northwestern State	35-48
O.22	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	17-35
O.29	Houston Baptist	55-7
N.5	@NICHOLLS STATE	28-30
N.12	Incarnate Word	28-21
N.19	@MCNEESE STATE	14-20

Coach: Ray Woodard
Nickname: Cardinals
2015 Record: 5-6

LEHIGH
Bethlehem, PA

S.3	Monmouth	
S.10	@VILLANOVA	
S.17	@PENNSYLVANIA	42-21
S.24	Princeton	26-52
O.1	@YALE	12-27
O.8	Colgate	42-49
O.15	@GEORGETOWN	33-28
O.22	@HOLY CROSS	51-38
O.29	Fordham	42-59
N.5	Bucknell	21-10
N.19	@LAFAYETTE	49-35

Coach: Andy Coen
Nickname: Mountain Hawks
2015 Record: 6-5

LIBERTY
Lynchburg, VA

S.3	@VIRGINIA TECH	
S.10	Jacksonville	
S.17	@SMU	
S.24	Jacksonville State	
O.1	Robert Morris	
O.15	@KENNESAW STATE	45-35
O.22	Monmouth	17-20
O.29	Gardner-Webb	20-34
N.5	@PRESBYTERIAN	21-13
N.12	Charleston Southern	24-31
N.17	@COASTAL CAROLINA	24-21

Coach: Turner Gill
Nickname: Flames
2015 Record: 6-5

MAINE
Orono, ME

S.1	@CONNECTICUT	
S.10	@TOLEDO	
S.24	James Madison	
O.1	Bryant	
O.8	@DELAWARE	
O.15	Albany	39-7
O.22	@RHODE ISLAND	27-17
O.29	@WILLIAM & MARY	
N.5	Villanova	3-13
N.12	@STONY BROOK	23-10
N.19	New Hampshire	6-22

Coach: Joe Harasymiak
Nickname: Black Bears
2015 Record: 3-8

MARIST
Poughkeepsie, NY

S.3	Bucknell	0-17
S.10	Georgetown	7-34
S.17	@SACRED HEART	34-27
O.1	Campbell	13-10
O.8	@BUTLER	35-14
O.15	@MOREHEAD STATE	17-20
O.22	Davidson	31-10
O.29	San Diego	27-30
N.5	@STETSON	49-14
N.12	Dayton	21-28
N.19	@JACKSONVILLE	16-20

Coach: Jim Parady
Nickname: Red Foxes
2015 Record: 5-6

MCNEESE STATE
Lake Charles, LA

S.3	Tarleton State	
S.10	@LOUISIANA	
S.17	Stephen F. Austin	28-14
S.24	@INCARNATE WORD	43-6
O.1	Nicholls State	37-7
O.8	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	21-7
O.15	Central Arkansas	28-13
O.22	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	47-27
O.29	Abilene Christian	15-13
N.5	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	29-34
N.19	Lamar	20-14

Coach: Lance Guidry
Nickname: Cowboys
2015 Record: 10-1

MERCER
Macon, GA

S.1	Citadel	19-21
S.10	@GEORGIA TECH	
S.17	Tennessee Tech	22-29
O.1	@VMI	21-28
O.8	@CHATTANOOGA	17-14
O.15	Western Carolina	21-24
O.22	@AUSTIN PEAY	28-7
O.29	@WOFFORD	33-34
N.5	East Tennessee State	52-0
N.12	@SAMFORD	21-47
N.19	Furman	27-20

Coach: Bobby Lamb
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 5-6

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE
Itta Bena, MS

S.3	@EASTERN MICHIGAN	
S.10	Alabama A&M	27-24
S.17	@TEXAS SOUTHERN	21-49
S.24	Prairie View A&M	6-45
O.1	@JACKSON STATE	16-26
O.8	@MONTANA	
O.15	@ALABAMA STATE	15-45
O.22	Grambling State	14-49
N.5	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	19-25
N.12	Alcorn State	14-55
N.19	@SOUTHERN	13-50

Coach: Rick Comegy
Nickname: Delta Devils
2015 Record: 1-10

MISSOURI STATE
Springfield, MO

S.1	Southwestern (KS)	
S.10	@MURRAY STATE	
S.24	@KANSAS STATE	
O.1	@INDIANA STATE	28-56
O.8	North Dakota State	0-55
O.15	Western Illinois	
O.22	@NORTHERN IOWA	0-41
O.29	Southern Illinois	26-73
N.5	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	0-39
N.12	@ILLINOIS STATE	2-38
N.19	Youngstown State	7-47

Coach: Dave Steckel
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 1-10

MONMOUTH
West Long Branch, NJ

S.3	@LEHIGH	
S.10	@DELAWARE STATE	
S.17	@KENT STATE	
S.24	Charleston Southern	7-37
O.1	Fordham	31-54
O.8	@HOWARD	
O.13	@PRESBYTERIAN	21-16
O.22	@LIBERTY	20-17
O.29	Kennesaw State	13-23
N.5	@COASTAL CAROLINA	20-23
N.19	@GARDNER-WEBB	23-9

Coach: Kevin Callahan
Nickname: Hawks
2015 Record: 5-6

MONTANA
Missoula, MT

S.3	St. Francis (PA)	
S.10	@NORTHERN IOWA	
S.24	@CAL POLY	19-20
O.1	Southern Utah	
O.8	Mississippi Valley State	
O.15	Sacramento State	
O.22	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	23-14
O.29	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	57-16
N.5	Idaho State	33-27
N.12	@NORTHERN COLORADO	
N.19	Montana State	54-35

Coach: Bob Stitt
Nickname: Grizzlies
2015 Record: 8-5

MONTANA STATE
Bozeman, MT

S.1	@IDAHO	
S.10	Bryant	
S.17	Western Oregon	
S.24	North Dakota	38-44
O.1	@SACRAMENTO STATE	35-13
O.8	Northern Arizona	41-49
O.15	@WEBER STATE	
O.22	Eastern Washington	50-55
N.5	@SOUTHERN UTAH	23-34
N.12	UC Davis	
N.19	@MONTANA	35-54

Coach: Jeff Choate
Nickname: Bobcats
2015 Record: 5-6

MOREHEAD STATE
Morehead, KY

S.3	@JAMES MADISON	7-56
S.10	VMI	40-43
S.17	Lincoln (PA)	
S.24	@DRAKE	38-35
O.1	Valparaiso	36-29
O.8	@DAYTON	15-20
O.15	Marist	20-17
O.22	Jacksonville	26-30
N.5	@BUTLER	34-21
N.12	Campbell	31-27
N.19	@DAVIDSON	34-0

Coach: Rob Tenyer
Nickname: Eagles
2015 Record: 7-4

MORGAN STATE
Baltimore, MD

S.3	Holy Cross	
S.10	@MARSHALL	
S.24	Howard*	21-13
O.1	Delaware State	26-6
O.8	@SAVANNAH STATE	42-3
O.15	@HAMPTON	10-20
O.22	North Carolina Central	17-20
O.29	@NORFOLK STATE	10-17
N.5	Bethune-Cookman	14-38
N.12	@FLORIDA A&M	21-7
N.19	@ARMY	

*At East Rutherford, NJ
Coach: Fred Farrier
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 4-6

MURRAY STATE
Murray, KY

S.3	@ILLINOIS	
S.10	Missouri State	
S.17	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	
S.24	Southeast Missouri State	10-27
O.1	@AUSTIN PEAY	34-18
O.15	Tennessee-Martin	45-52
O.22	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	20-34
O.29	Tennessee State	46-43
N.5	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	34-41
N.12	Jacksonville State	20-42
N.19	@TENNESSEE TECH	29-31

Coach: Mitch Stewart
Nickname: Racers
2015 Record: 3-8

NEW HAMPSHIRE
Durham, NH

S.3	@SAN DIEGO STATE	
S.10	Holy Cross	
S.17	@DARTMOUTH	
S.24	@RHODE ISLAND	20-17
O.1	William & Mary	18-34
O.8	@ELON	37-14
O.15	James Madison	
O.22	@TOWSON	
O.29	Stony Brook	6-31
N.12	Albany	24-14
N.19	@MAINE	22-6

Coach: Sean McDonnell
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 7-5

NICHOLLS STATE
Thibodaux, LA

S.10	@GEORGIA	
S.17	Incarnate Word	10-20
S.24	@SOUTH ALABAMA	
O.1	@MCNEESE STATE	7-37
O.8	Stephen F. Austin	24-28
O.15	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	38-17
O.22	Sam Houston State	7-37
O.29	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	21-37
N.5	Lamar	30-28
N.12	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	31-34
N.17	Southeastern Louisiana	27-24

Coach: Tim Rebowe
Nickname: Colonels
2015 Record: 3-8

NORFOLK STATE
Norfolk, VA

S.3	Elizabeth City State	
S.10	@RICHMOND	
S.17	@WILLIAM & MARY	
S.24	North Carolina Central	16-24
O.1	Howard	15-12
O.8	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	3-27
O.22	Bethune-Cookman	49-59
O.29	Morgan State	17-10
N.5	@SAVANNAH STATE	20-17
N.12	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	10-17
N.19	@HAMPTON	24-14

Coach: Latrell Scott
Nickname: Spartans
2015 Record: 4-7

NORTH CAROLINA A&T
Greensboro, NC

S.3	St. Augustine's	
S.10	@KENT STATE	
S.17	@TULSA	
O.1	Hampton	45-31
O.8	Norfolk State	27-3
O.15	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	24-14
O.22	@HOWARD	65-14
O.29	Florida A&M	28-10
N.5	South Carolina State	9-6
N.12	@DELAWARE STATE	27-6
N.19	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	16-21

Coach: Rod Broadway
Nickname: Aggies
2015 Record: 10-2

NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL
Durham, NC

S.3	@DUKE	0-55
S.10	@WESTERN MICHIGAN	
S.17	St. Augustine's	72-0
S.24	@NORFOLK STATE	24-16
O.1	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	26-28
O.8	Florida A&M	27-24
O.15	Savannah State	39-22
O.22	@MORGAN STATE	20-17
N.5	@DELAWARE STATE	43-10
N.12	Howard	41-6
N.19	North Carolina A&T	21-16

Coach: Jerry Mack
Nickname: Eagles
2015 Record: 8-3

NORTH DAKOTA
Grand Forks, ND

S.1	@STONY BROOK	
S.10	@BOWLING GREEN	
S.17	South Dakota	
S.24	@MONTANA STATE	44-38
O.1	Cal Poly	45-21
O.8	@SACRAMENTO STATE	
O.15	Southern Utah	
O.22	@IDAHO STATE	31-37
O.29	Weber State	24-25
N.5	@NORTHERN COLORADO	45-14
N.12	Northern Arizona	

Coach: Bubba Schweigert
Nickname: Fighting Hawks
2015 Record: 7-4

NORTH DAKOTA STATE
Fargo, ND

A.27	Charleston Southern	
S.10	Eastern Washington	
S.17	@IOWA	
O.1	Illinois State	
O.8	@MISSOURI STATE	55-0
O.15	South Dakota State	28-7
O.22	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	59-7
O.29	@NORTHERN IOWA	23-13
N.5	Youngstown State	27-24
N.12	Indiana State	28-14
N.19	@SOUTH DAKOTA	21-24

Coach: Chris Klieman
Nickname: Bison
2015 Record: 13-2

NORTHERN ARIZONA
Flagstaff, AZ

S.3	@ARIZONA STATE	
S.10	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	
S.17	New Mexico Highlands	41-5
S.24	Eastern Washington	52-30
O.1	@NORTHERN COLORADO	63-21
O.8	@MONTANA STATE	49-41
O.15	Idaho State	
O.22	Montana	14-23
N.5	@WEBER STATE	52-36
N.12	@NORTH DAKOTA	
N.19	Southern Utah	41-49

Coach: Jerome Souers
Nickname: Lumberjacks
2015 Record: 7-4

NORTHERN COLORADO
Greeley, CO

S.3	Rocky Mountain (Mont.)	
S.10	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	40-36
S.17	@COLORADO STATE	
O.1	Northern Arizona	21-63
O.8	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	41-43
O.15	@UC DAVIS	56-27
O.22	Sacramento State	27-20
O.29	@PORTLAND STATE	35-32
N.5	North Dakota	14-45
N.12	Montana	
N.19	@CAL POLY	

Coach: Earnest Collins Jr.
Nickname: Bears
2015 Record: 6-5

NORTHERN IOWA
Cedar Falls, IA

S.3	@IOWA STATE	7-31
S.10	Montana	
S.17	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	38-35
O.1	Southern Illinois	49-28
O.8	@SOUTH DAKOTA	20-7
O.15	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	
O.22	Missouri State	41-0
O.29	North Dakota State	13-23
N.5	@INDIANA STATE	59-13
N.12	@WESTERN ILLINOIS	19-24
N.19	South Dakota State	10-7

Coach: Mark Farley
Nickname: Panthers
2015 Record: 9-5

NORTHWESTERN STATE
Natchitoches, LA

S.3	@BAYLOR	
S.10	Incarnate Word	31-45
S.17	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	21-49
S.24	@SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA	20-34
O.8	Kentucky Wesleyan	
O.15	@LAMAR	48-35
O.22	McNeese State	27-47
O.29	Nicholls State	37-21
N.5	@ABILENE CHRISTIAN	39-22
N.12	Sam Houston State	21-59
N.19	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	33-17

Coach: Jay Thomas
Nickname: Demons
2015 Record: 4-7

PENNSYLVANIA
Philadelphia, PA

S.17	Lehigh	21-42
S.24	@FORDHAM	45-48
O.1	@DARTMOUTH	20-41
O.8	Central Connecticut State	
O.15	Columbia	42-7
O.22	@YALE	34-20
O.29	Brown	48-28
N.5	@PRINCETON	26-23
N.12	Harvard	35-25
N.19	@CORNELL	34-21

Coach: Ray Priore
Nickname: Quakers
2015 Record: 7-3

PORTLAND STATE
Portland, OR

S.3	Central Washington	
S.10	@SAN JOSE STATE	
S.17	@WASHINGTON	
S.24	@SOUTHERN UTAH	24-23
O.1	Idaho State	34-14
O.8	@WEBER STATE	

SCHEDULES

2016 FCS SCHEDULES

0.15	Cal Poly	38-35
0.29	Northern Colorado	32-35
N.5	@UC DAVIS	
N.12	@SACRAMENTO STATE	
N.18	Eastern Washington	34-31

Coach: Bruce Barnum
Nickname: Vikings
2015 Record: 9-3

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M
Prairie View, TX

S.3	Texas Southern	38-11
S.10	@TEXAS A&M	
S.17	@ALABAMA A&M	53-49
S.24	@MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE	45-6
0.1	Grambling State*	54-70
0.8	Alabama State	38-13
0.22	@RICE	
0.29	@JACKSON STATE	56-14
N.5	Alcorn State	40-34
N.12	Southern	47-42
N.19	@ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF	54-29

At Dallas, TX
Coach: Willie Simmons
Nickname: Panthers
2015 Record: 9-2

PRESBYTERIAN
Clinton, SC

S.1	@CENTRAL MICHIGAN	
S.10	@CHATTANOOGA	0-21
S.17	@CAMPBELL	23-13
S.24	Florida Tech	
0.8	@GARDNER-WEBB	16-21
0.13	Monmouth	10-14
0.22	@CHARLESTON SOUTHERN	7-10
0.29	Coastal Carolina	17-24
N.5	Liberty	13-21
N.12	@KENNESAW STATE	14-6
N.19	@FLORIDA	

Coach: Harold Nichols
Nickname: Blue Hose
2015 Record: 2-9

PRINCETON
Princeton, NJ

S.17	Lafayette	40-7
S.24	@LEHIGH	52-26
0.1	@COLUMBIA	10-5
0.8	@GEORGETOWN	
0.15	Brown	31-38
0.22	Harvard	7-42
0.29	@CORNELL	47-21
N.5	Pennsylvania	23-26
N.12	@YALE	28-35
N.19	Dartmouth	10-17

Coach: Bob Surace
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 5-5

RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, RI

S.3	@KANSAS	
S.10	Albany	7-35
S.16	@HARVARD	10-41
S.24	New Hampshire	17-20
0.1	Brown	31-41
0.8	@VILLANOVA	3-24
0.15	@STONY BROOK	7-19
0.22	Maine	17-27
0.29	@JAMES MADISON	
N.12	@ELON	
N.19	Towson	21-38

Coach: Jim Fleming
Nickname: Rams
2015 Record: 1-10

RICHMOND
Richmond, VA

S.3	@VIRGINIA	
S.10	Norfolk State	
S.17	@STONY BROOK	
S.24	Colgate	
0.1	Towson	
0.8	@ALBANY	38-31
0.15	Villanova	20-21
0.22	@ELON	27-14
N.5	James Madison	59-49
N.12	Delaware	
N.19	@WILLIAM & MARY	48-13

Coach: Danny Rocco
Nickname: Spiders
2015 Record: 10-4

ROBERT MORRIS
Moon Township, PA

S.1	Alderson Broaddus	
S.10	@DAYTON	24-27
S.17	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	14-21
S.24	Malone	
0.1	@LIBERTY	
0.8	St. Francis (Pa.)	0-21
0.15	@DUQUESNE	7-16
0.22	@SACRED HEART	13-26
0.29	Central Connecticut State	0-34
N.5	@BRYANT	21-20
N.12	Wagner	9-6

Coach: John Banaszak
Nickname: Colonials
2015 Record: 4-7

SACRAMENTO STATE
Sacramento, CA

S.3	Western Oregon	
S.10	@FRESNO STATE	
S.17	@WEBER STATE	14-32
S.24	@IDAHO STATE	38-13
0.1	Montana State	13-35
0.8	North Dakota	
0.15	@MONTANA	
0.22	@NORTHERN COLORADO	20-27
0.29	Cal Poly	14-36
N.12	Portland State	
N.19	@UC DAVIS	21-35

Coach: Jody Sears
Nickname: Hornets
2015 Record: 2-9

SACRED HEART
Fairfield, CT

S.3	@STETSON	
S.10	Valparaiso	56-3
S.17	Marist	27-34
S.24	@STONY BROOK	
0.1	@WAGNER	45-17
0.15	@CORNELL	31-6
0.22	Robert Morris	26-13
0.29	St. Francis (Pa.)	14-23
N.5	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	10-26
N.12	@DUQUESNE	14-41
N.19	Bryant	28-19

Coach: Mark Nofri
Nickname: Pioneers
2015 Record: 6-5

SAM HOUSTON STATE
Huntsville, TX

S.3	Oklahoma Panhandle State	
S.17	@LAMAR	46-49
S.24	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	63-14
0.1	Stephen F. Austin*	34-28
0.8	@INCARNATE WORD	59-7
0.15	Abilene Christian	49-21
0.22	@NICHOLLS STATE	37-7
0.29	Texas Southern	
N.5	McNeese State	34-29
N.12	@NORTHWESTERN STATE	59-21
N.19	Central Arkansas	42-13

At Houston, TX
Coach: K.C. Keeler
Nickname: Bearkats
2015 Record: 11-4

SAMFORD
Birmingham, AL

S.1	Mars Hill	
S.10	@CENTRAL ARKANSAS	45-16
S.24	@CHATTANOOGA	21-31
0.1	Wofford	37-27
0.8	@FURMAN	17-20
0.15	VMI	49-13
0.22	Western Carolina	36-56
0.29	@MISSISSIPPI STATE	
N.5	@CITADEL	25-44
N.12	Mercer	47-21
N.19	@EAST TENNESSEE STATE	

Coach: Chris Hatcher
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 6-5

SAN DIEGO
San Diego, CA

S.3	Western New Mexico	45-21
S.10	@CAL POLY	
S.24	Dayton	12-13
0.1	@BUTLER	28-27
0.8	Davidson	35-10
0.15	@DRAKE	27-0
0.22	Valparaiso	38-6
0.29	@MARIST	30-20
N.5	Universidad De Las Americas Puebla	
N.12	Stetson	47-16
N.19	@CAMPBELL	31-27

Coach: Dale Lindsey
Nickname: Toreros
2015 Record: 9-2

SAVANNAH STATE
Savannah, GA

S.3	@GEORGIA SOUTHERN	
S.10	@SOUTHERN MISS	
S.24	Bethune-Cookman	12-42
0.1	@FLORIDA A&M	37-27
0.8	Morgan State	3-42
0.15	@NORTH CAROLINA CENTRAL	22-39
0.29	Howard	9-55
N.5	Norfolk State	17-20
N.12	@HAMPTON	3-42
N.19	@SOUTH CAROLINA STATE	29-52

Coach: Erik Raeburn
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 1-9

SOUTH CAROLINA STATE
Orangeburg, SC

S.3	@UCF	
S.10	@LOUISIANA TECH	
S.17	@CLEMSON	
S.24	@FLORIDA A&M	36-0
0.8	Bethune-Cookman	14-17
0.15	@HOWARD	49-10
0.22	Delaware State	34-7
0.29	@HAMPTON	34-20
N.5	@NORTH CAROLINA A&T	6-9
N.12	Norfolk State	17-10
N.19	Savannah State	52-29

Coach: Buddy Pough
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 7-4

SOUTH DAKOTA
Vermillion, SD

S.3	@NEW MEXICO	
S.10	Weber State	
S.17	@NORTH DAKOTA	
0.1	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	3-31
0.8	Northern Iowa	7-20
0.15	@INDIANA STATE	
0.22	Illinois State	0-46
0.29	Western Illinois	21-40
N.5	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	34-31
N.12	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	23-30
N.19	North Dakota State	24-21

Coach: Bob Nielson
Nickname: Coyotes
2015 Record: 5-6

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE
Brookings, SD

S.3	@TCU	
S.10	Drake	
S.17	Cal Poly	
0.1	Western Illinois	24-30
0.8	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	
0.15	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	7-28
0.22	Youngstown State	38-8
0.29	@ILLINOIS STATE	25-20
N.5	Missouri State	39-0
N.12	South Dakota	30-23
N.19	@NORTHERN IOWA	7-10

Coach: John Stiegelmeier
Nickname: Jackrabbits
2015 Record: 8-4

SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE
Cape Girardeau, MO

S.3	@MEMPHIS	
S.10	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	27-24
S.17	Indiana State	28-29
S.24	@MURRAY STATE	27-10
0.1	Eastern Illinois	28-33
0.8	@EASTERN KENTUCKY	10-27
0.22	@TENNESSEE TECH	38-17
0.29	Austin Peay	44-15
N.5	Jacksonville State	28-56
N.12	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	25-28
N.19	Tennessee State	

Coach: Tom Matukewicz
Nickname: Redhawks
2015 Record: 4-7

SOUTHEASTERN LOUISIANA
Hammond, LA

S.3	@OKLAHOMA STATE	
S.10	@SOUTHERN UTAH	
S.24	Northwestern State	34-20
0.1	@LAMAR	30-27
0.8	McNeese State	7-21
0.15	@STEPHEN F. AUSTIN	27-28
0.22	Houston Baptist	22-7
0.29	Central Arkansas	16-21
N.5	@INCARNATE WORD	2-16
N.12	Abilene Christian	17-21
N.17	@NICHOLLS STATE	24-27

Coach: Ron Roberts
Nickname: Lions
2015 Record: 4-7

SOUTHERN
Baton Rouge, LA

S.3	@LOUISIANA-MONROE	
S.10	@TULANE	
S.17	Alabama State	45-34
S.24	@ALABAMA A&M	46-7
0.15	@JACKSON STATE	50-31
0.22	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	57-24
0.29	@ALCORN STATE	7-48
N.5	Texas Southern	40-21
N.12	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	42-47
N.19	Mississippi Valley State	50-13
N.26	Grambling State*	23-34

At New Orleans, LA
Coach: Dawson Odums
Nickname: Jaguars
2015 Record: 6-5

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
Carbondale, IL

S.3	@FLORIDA ATLANTIC	
S.10	Southeast Missouri State	24-27
S.17	Murray State	
0.1	@NORTHERN IOWA	28-49
0.8	South Dakota State	
0.15	@ILLINOIS STATE	21-42
0.22	Indiana State	36-39
0.29	@MISSOURI STATE	73-26
N.5	South Dakota	31-34
N.12	@YOUNGSTOWN STATE	38-31
N.19	Western Illinois	36-37

Coach: Nick Hill
Nickname: Salukis
2015 Record: 3-8

SOUTHERN UTAH
Cedar City, UT

S.1	@UTAH	
S.10	Southeastern Louisiana	
S.24	Portland State	23-24
0.1	@MONTANA	
0.8	UC Davis	34-6
0.15	@NORTH DAKOTA	
0.22	Weber State	44-0

0.29	@IDAHO STATE	
N.5	Montana State	34-23
N.12	@BYU	
N.19	@NORTHERN ARIZONA	49-41

Coach: Demario Warren
Nickname: Thunderbirds
2015 Record: 8-4

ST. FRANCIS (PA)

Loretto, PA

S.3	@MONTANA	
S.10	@TOWSON	20-35
S.17	@COLUMBIA	
S.24	@ALBANY	
0.1	Malone	
0.8	@ROBERT MORRIS	21-0
0.15	Bryant	24-26
0.22	Duquesne	20-30
0.29	@SACRED HEART	23-14
N.12	Central Connecticut State	22-13
N.19	@WAGNER	43-14

Coach: Chris Villarrial
Nickname: Red Flash
2015 Record: 7-4

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN

Nacogdoches, TX

S.3	@TEXAS TECH	
S.10	West Alabama	
S.17	@MCNEESE STATE	14-28
S.24	Abilene Christian	32-35
0.1	Sam Houston State*	28-34
0.8	@NICHOLLS STATE	28-24
0.15	Southeastern Louisiana	28-27
0.29	@INCARNATE WORD	55-21
N.5	Central Arkansas	24-36
N.12	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	55-20
N.19	Northwestern State	17-33

*At Houston, TX
Coach: Clint Conque
Nickname: Lumberjacks
2015 Record: 4-7

STETSON

DeLand, FL

S.3	Sacred Heart	
S.10	Warner	
S.24	Jacksonville	14-41
0.1	@DAVIDSON	17-20
0.8	@BROWN	
0.15	Valparaiso	37-14
0.22	@CAMPBELL	6-16
0.29	@DAYTON	14-27
N.5	Marist	14-49
N.12	@SAN DIEGO	16-47
N.19	Drake	3-41

Coach: Roger Hughes
Nickname: Hatters
2015 Record: 3-8

STONY BROOK

Stony Brook, NY

S.1	North Dakota	
S.10	@TEMPLE	
S.17	Richmond	
S.24	Sacred Heart	
0.8	@TOWSON	14-21
0.15	Rhode Island	19-7
0.22	@DELAWARE	
0.29	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	31-6
N.5	William & Mary	0-21
N.12	Maine	10-23
N.19	@ALBANY	20-2

Coach: Chuck Priore
Nickname: Seawolves
2015 Record: 5-5

TENNESSEE STATE

Nashville, TN

S.3	Arkansas-Pine Bluff*	
S.10	Jackson State**	35-25
S.17	@BETHUNE-COOKMAN	
0.1	Tennessee-Martin	14-28
0.8	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	22-25
0.15	Eastern Kentucky*	21-45
0.22	@VANDERBILT	
0.29	@MURRAY STATE	43-46
N.5	@AUSTIN PEAY	20-6
N.12	Tennessee Tech	24-30
N.19	@SOUTHEAST MISSOURI STATE	

*At Nissan Stadium, **At Memphis, TN
Coach: Rod Reed
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 4-6

TENNESSEE TECH

Cookeville, TN

S.1	Wofford	14-34
S.10	@AUSTIN PEAY	42-24
S.17	@MERCER	29-22
S.24	@TENNESSEE-MARTIN	17-31
0.1	Eastern Kentucky	17-48
0.8	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	13-42
0.15	Eastern Illinois	20-51
0.22	Southeast Missouri State	17-38
N.5	@TENNESSEE	
N.12	@TENNESSEE STATE	30-24
N.19	Murray State	31-29

Coach: Marcus Satterfield
Nickname: Golden Eagles
2015 Record: 4-7

TENNESSEE-MARTIN

Martin, TN

S.1	@CINCINNATI	
S.10	@HAWAII	
S.24	Tennessee Tech	31-17
0.1	@TENNESSEE STATE	28-14
0.8	Austin Peay	44-14
0.15	@MURRAY STATE	52-45
0.22	@GEORGIA STATE	
0.29	Eastern Kentucky	42-35
N.5	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	21-23
N.12	Southeast Missouri State	28-25
N.19	@JACKSONVILLE STATE	41-48

Coach: Jason Simpson
Nickname: Skyhawks
2015 Record: 7-4

TEXAS SOUTHERN

Houston, TX

S.3	@PRAIRIE VIEW A&M	11-38
S.10	@HOUSTON BAPTIST	
S.17	Mississippi Valley State	49-21
S.24	@ALABAMA STATE	23-41
0.1	Alabama A&M	7-38
0.15	@ALCORN STATE	13-65
0.22	Jackson State	30-34
0.29	@SAM HOUSTON STATE	
N.5	@SOUTHERN	21-40
N.12	Arkansas-Pine Bluff	24-20
N.19	Grambling State	15-41

Coach: Mike Haywood
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 3-7

TOWSON

Towson, MD

S.3	@SOUTH FLORIDA	
S.10	St. Francis (PA)	35-20
S.17	@VILLANOVA	28-21
0.1	@RICHMOND	
0.8	Stony Brook	21-14
0.15	@DARTMOUTH	
0.22	New Hampshire	
0.29	@DELAWARE	19-0
N.5	Elon	13-17
N.12	William & Mary	17-31
N.19	@RHODE ISLAND	38-21

Coach: Rob Ambrose
Nickname: Tigers
2015 Record: 7-4

UC DAVIS

Davis, CA

S.3	@OREGON	
S.10	Southern Oregon	
S.17	@WYOMING	
S.24	Weber State	3-23
0.1	@EASTERN WASHINGTON	
0.8	@SOUTHERN UTAH	6-34
0.15	Northern Colorado	27-56
0.22	@CAL POLY	38-55
N.5	Portland State	
N.12	@MONTANA STATE	
N.19	Sacramento State	35-21

Coach: Ron Gould
Nickname: Aggies
2015 Record: 2-9

VALPARAISO

Valparaiso, IN

S.3	@ILLINOIS STATE	
S.10	@SACRED HEART	3-56
S.17	Trinity International	
S.24	Davidson	42-35
0.1	@MOREHEAD STATE	29-36
0.8	Drake	7-34
0.15	@STETSON	14-37
0.22	@SAN DIEGO	6-38
0.29	Butler	21-42
N.5	@DAYTON	14-44
N.12	Jacksonville	13-58

Coach: Dave Cecchini
Nickname: Crusaders
2015 Record: 1-9

VILLANOVA

Villanova, PA

S.3	@PITTSBURGH	
S.10	Lehigh	
S.17	Towson	21-28
S.24	@LAFAYETTE	
0.1	@ELON	
0.8	Rhode Island	24-3
0.15	@RICHMOND	21-20
0.22	Albany	37-0
N.5	@MAINE	13-3
N.12	James Madison	29-38
N.19	@DELAWARE	28-21

Coach: Andy Talley
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 6-5

VMI

Lexington, VA

S.3	@AKRON	
S.10	@MOREHEAD STATE	43-40
S.24	@BUCKNELL	22-28
0.1	Mercer	28-21
0.8	East Tennessee State	
0.15	@SAMFORD	13-49
0.22	@CHATTANOOGA	27-33
0.29	Furman	21-24
N.5	@WESTERN CAROLINA	20-24
N.12	Citadel	14-35
N.19	@WOFFORD	20-41

Coach: Scott Wachenheim
Nickname: Keydets
2015 Record: 2-9

WAGNER

Staten Island, NY

S.1	Saint Anselm	
S.10	Concordia (Mich.)	
S.24	@BOSTON COLLEGE	
0.1	Sacred Heart	17-45
0.8	Columbia	3-26
0.15	@CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE	28-7
0.22	@BRYANT	10-40
0.29	@MASSACHUSETTS	
N.5	Duquesne	17-35
N.12	@ROBERT MORRIS	6-9
N.19	St. Francis (Pa.)	14-43

Coach: Jason Houghtaling
Nickname: Seahawks
2015 Record: 1-10

WEBER STATE

Ogden, UT

S.1	@UTAH STATE	
S.10	@SOUTH DAKOTA	
S.17	Sacramento State	32-14
S.24	@UC DAVIS	23-3
0.8	Portland State	
0.15	Montana State	
0.22	@SOUTHERN UTAH	0-44
0.29	@NORTH DAKOTA	25-24
N.5	Northern Arizona	36-52
N.12	Cal Poly	
N.19	@IDAHO STATE	35-14

Coach: Jay Hill
Nickname: Wildcats
2015 Record: 6-5

WESTERN CAROLINA

Cullowhee, NC

S.3	@EAST CAROLINA	
S.10	Gardner-Webb	
S.17	East Tennessee State*	
0.1	Citadel	10-28
0.8	Wofford	24-17
0.15	@MERCER	24-21
0.22	@SAMFORD	56-36
0.29	Chattanooga	13-41
N.5	VMI	24-20
N.12	@FURMAN	48-10
N.19	@SOUTH CAROLINA	

*At Bristol, TN
Coach: Mark Speir
Nickname: Catamounts
2015 Record: 7-4

WESTERN ILLINOIS

Macomb, IL

S.1	@EASTERN ILLINOIS	33-5
S.10	Northern Arizona	
S.24	@NORTHERN ILLINOIS	
0.1	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	30-24
0.8	Indiana State	37-30
0.15	@MISSOURI STATE	
0.22	North Dakota State	7-59
0.29	@SOUTH DAKOTA	40-21
N.5	Illinois State	19-36
N.12	Northern Iowa	24-19
N.19	@SOUTHERN ILLINOIS	37-36

Coach: Charlie Fisher
Nickname: Leathernecks
2015 Record: 7-6

WILLIAM & MARY

Williamsburg, VA

S.1	@N.C. STATE	
S.10	@HAMPTON	40-7
S.17	Norfolk State	
S.24	Elon	34-13
0.1	@NEW HAMPSHIRE	34-18
0.8	@JAMES MADISON	44-41
0.15	Delaware	23-24
0.29	Maine	
N.5	@STONY BROOK	21-0
N.12	@TOWSON	31-17
N.19	Richmond	13-48

Coach: Jimmye Laycock
Nickname: Tribe
2015 Record: 9-4

WOFFORD

Spartanburg, SC

S.1	@TENNESSEE TECH	34-14
S.10	@OLE MISS	
S.17	Johnson C. Smith	
S.24	East Tennessee State	
0.1	@SAMFORD	27-37
0.8	@WESTERN CAROLINA	17-24
0.22	Citadel	12-39
0.29	Mercer	34-33
N.5	@FURMAN	38-28
N.12	@CHATTANOOGA	17-20
N.19	VMI	41-20

Coach: Mike Ayers
Nickname: Terriers
2015 Record: 5-6

YALE

New Haven, CT

S.17	Colgate	29-28
S.24	@CORNELL	33-26
0.1	Lehigh	27-12
0.8	Dartmouth	3-35
0.15	@FORDHAM	
0.22	Pennsylvania	20-34
0.29	@COLUMBIA	7-17
N.5	@BROWN	41-14
N.12	Princeton	35-28
N.19	@HARVARD	19-38

Coach: Tony Reno
Nickname: Bulldogs
2015 Record: 6-4

YOUNGSTOWN STATE

Youngstown, OH

S.1	Duquesne	
S.10	@WEST VIRGINIA	
S.17	Robert Morris	21-14
0.1	South Dakota	31-3
0.8	@ILLINOIS STATE	29-31
0.15	Northern Iowa	
0.22	@SOUTH DAKOTA STATE	8-38
0.29	Indiana State	24-27
N.5	@NORTH DAKOTA STATE	24-27
N.12	Southern Illinois	31-38
N.19	@MISSOURI STATE	47-7

Coach: Bo Pelini
Nickname: Penguins
2015 Record: 5-6

BOWLS

SportingNews 2016 BOWL PROJECTIONS

→ By Bill Bender Sporting News college football writer

NEW YEAR'S DAY

ORANGE BOWL
FLORIDA STATE VS TENNESSEE
Dec. 30, ESPN

COTTON BOWL
USC VS HOUSTON
Jan. 2, ESPN

SUGAR BOWL
BAYLOR VS OLE MISS
Jan. 2, ESPN

ROSE BOWL
MICHIGAN VS STANFORD
Jan. 2, ESPN

- **Cure Bowl** *(Dec. 17, CBSSN)*
  East Carolina VS Troy
- **Boca Raton Bowl** *(Dec. 20, ESPN)*
  Northern Illinois VS Florida Atlantic
- **New Mexico Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Colorado State VS UTEP
- **Las Vegas Bowl** *(Date TBA, ABC)*
  California VS San Diego State
- **Camellia Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Western Michigan VS Arkansas State
- **New Orleans Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Appalachian State VS Marshall
- **Miami Beach Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Ohio VS Tulsa
- **Famous Idaho Potato Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Toledo VS New Mexico
- **Poinsettia Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  BYU VS Air Force
- **GoDaddy Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Bowling Green VS Georgia Southern
- **Bahamas Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Cincinnati VS Middle Tennessee
- **Hawaii Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Boise State VS Rice
- **St. Petersburg Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Duke VS South Florida
- **Heart of Dallas Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Indiana VS Southern Miss
- **Pinstripe Bowl** *(Date TBA, ABC)*
  Nebraska VS Georgia Tech
- **Independence Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Pittsburgh VS Western Kentucky
- **Foster Farms Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Northwestern VS UCLA
- **Military Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Boston College VS Memphis
- **Quick Lane Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN2)*
  Minnesota VS N.C. State
- **Armed Forces Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Navy VS Kansas State
- **Russell Athletic Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  North Carolina VS Texas
- **Arizona Bowl** *(Date TBA, TV TBA)*
  Nevada VS Louisiana Tech
- **Texas Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  TCU VS Texas A&M
- **Birmingham Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Mississippi State VS Temple
- **Belk Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Virginia Tech VS Auburn
- **Music City Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Miami (Fla.) VS Arkansas
- **Holiday Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Wisconsin VS Oregon
- **Sun Bowl** *(Dec. 30, CBS)*
  Louisville VS Washington State
- **Citrus Bowl** *(Dec. 31, ABC)*
  Iowa VS Georgia
- **Outback Bowl** *(Jan. 2, ABC)*
  Michigan State VS LSU
- **Liberty Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  West Virginia VS Florida
- **TaxSlayer Bowl** *(Dec. 31, ESPN)*
  Penn State VS Notre Dame
- **Alamo Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Oklahoma State VS Washington
- **Cactus Bowl** *(Date TBA, ESPN)*
  Texas Tech VS Utah

ROSE BOWL PARADE: MICHAEL OWEN BAKER / AP

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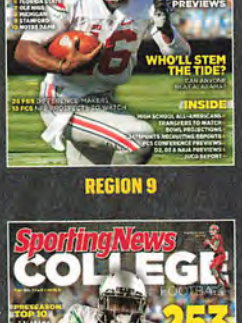

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